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# THE MONTH

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# THE MONTH

VOL. CLXXXV

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## EDITORIAL COMMENTS

### Changes in the Foreign Policy of Britain

**V**ERY rapidly the foreign policy of Britain is changing. During the past two years the political perspective has so altered that these years will be seen to mark a definite turning-point in British history.

The causes are manifold. Some of them are topographical, such as the conquest of distance through the aeroplane and rocket weapons which have largely done away with the traditional defence value of the English Channel, and the consequent "shrinking" of the world from the military point of view. Modern warfare has become global warfare. Other factors are political; like the rise to its position of predominance of the United States with which Britain stands in a special relationship, and the dangers that threaten Britain and Western Europe from the side of Russia.

For the past four hundred years the foreign policy of Britain with regard to the European Continent has been a "holding" one. Her chief preoccupation was lest some Continental Power or group of Powers should wholly dominate the Continent and thus jeopardise Britain's own position. Hence the system of "balance of power," by which Britain supported a less powerful against a more powerful country in order to maintain a certain European balance, favourable to or at least not dangerous for herself. Thus British policy during the sixteenth century was directed, in the main, against Spain; in the eighteenth, against France; in the twentieth, against Germany.

The eighteenth century was one of alliances and British intervention on the Continent. After the Napoleonic wars came a century of relative peace; Britain kept clear of Continental entanglements and made no alliances: to the nineteenth-century Englishman, the Continent must have appeared quite remote. However, this isolationist attitude had to be abandoned in 1914, just as the second World War has shown the United States that her foreign policy in the future can never again be isolationist.

It was because Britain was able to hold the balance of power in Europe owing to her favoured position beyond the English Channel, and her supremacy at sea, that she could establish colonies in the Americas and in Australia, and gain vast possessions in the East. She stood accordingly in a unique position to which the only parallel,

during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was that of Spain. She was, in the first place, a Continental Power whose influence was important, and whose support was generally decisive. Yet at the same time she was a bridge between Europe and the New Worlds of West and East, with which her interests were in the main concerned.

### The Bridge

THE new circumstances which are reshaping British foreign policy do not mean that her status as bridge between the Old World and the New is disappearing. Far from it. That status is as significant as ever, though the proportions of it have changed. In this century the British Empire has developed into a Commonwealth of nations, held together by common ideas and ideals. Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, are sovereign States, owing allegiance in every case not to the Government of Britain but to the British Crown. And now a great experiment has been made with two new Commonwealth members, India and Pakistan. Critics may argue that the British Empire has disintegrated. But that is to miss the spiritual unity which underlies Britain's association with the other Commonwealth countries; and to do scant justice to a remarkable achievement in international collaboration. That achievement is a free association of peoples within a system of their own designing. The links are looser, the tie of compulsion is non-existent; yet, these links have held fast under the stress and strain of wars when other and seemingly stronger links have snapped. In their very looseness, it may be, lies their strength. The crisis of these post-war years is bringing the peoples of the Commonwealth into ever closer relationship. Each of these States has its own policy and problems. Together, they are a mighty force for world stability and peace; also they can, and will, play a great rôle in the economic stabilisation of the world. Britain remains the centre of this Commonwealth: her contribution to the common effort, in experience, in skill and in man-power, can be highly important.

The bridge position of Britain with respect to the United States needs to be emphasized. It was Bismarck, I think, who was asked what he considered to be the chief factor in future international developments; his answer was "the fact that the people of the U.S.A. speak English." The two world wars, particularly the second, have brought the United States and Britain into a political association unique in the world. They are not allies. They do not need to be. The terms on which they are associated, and the spirit of their partnership, lie far deeper than any level of formal agreement. Their policies might clash here and there, over this or the other particular point. But it is certain that they would never clash noisily or stupidly, so considerable are their common interests, so sane and friendly their mutual behaviour. Both urgently desire stability and peace; both are strong advocates of the rule of law in international dealings, and of an



effective United Nations Organization ; each is a stout defender of a democratic way of life and government. The various attempts made in Britain to show that Britain, under its Labour Government, was a half-way house between the totalitarian State control of Russia and the free enterprise of the U.S.A., or that British Socialism stood midway between Soviet Communism and American democracy, have all broken down on the hard reality that in essential issues the British and American peoples think and act together. They act in a manner quite different from, and indeed opposed to, that of Russia. But Britain, though no half-way house, is still a bridge, not between the United States and Russia but between the U.S.A. and the countries of Europe. In their joint policies, it may well be, British experience will regulate and temper American vitality ; just as American forthrightness may curb the British tendency to over-compromise. Western Europe immediately—and, be it hoped, Eastern Europe subsequently—is entering into much closer relations with the United States. Britain, a European country with associations and long experience overseas, is a natural bridge between Europe and the United States.

### Britain Returns to Europe

**W**HAT I have said hitherto concerns an obvious development which is clear to everybody. What is, possibly, not so evident a development has come about during the past few months. Britain, in fact, has abandoned her traditional policy. By her alliance with France and the three Benelux States, and by the later economic agreements concluded in Brussels, she has once again declared herself a European Power. For four centuries she had remained aloof from Europe, intervening as from outside when her own interests were called in question. She made no common cause with European countries except for some limited objective, or where she felt herself immediately concerned.

New circumstances have compelled Britain to throw in her lot with that of Western Europe. It will be argued that she has done this, only because her own position is seriously threatened. That may be so. Yet this time her intervention is no casual or temporary measure ; she has not intervened to stabilise the position of one Continental Power against another. She realises that the policy of balance of power belongs to the past, that the question now is one of the defence and preservation of Western Europe. Britain finds herself, to-day, no longer a Power on the fringe of the Continent with a large measure of liberty of action, but the cornerstone in a society of Western peoples drawn together very closely indeed by a menace threatening them all.

A leader in the *Observer* for April 18th emphasized the importance of this movement :

In two short years our whole political perspective has silently but radically changed. Countries that were far away seem suddenly to have come very close. What happens to-day in Rome, Vienna or Berlin has become a British affair.

Last Friday, Mr. Bevin signed the Charter of European Economic Co-operation, which links our economic fate immediately with that of fifteen European nations. It was hardly even news. And yet it marked a further step in one of the greatest international revolutions of our times, and in one of the greatest revolutions in British history—the return of Britain to Europe.

We believe this revolution conforms to a profound historic necessity, and we believe that what we are doing is right for Europe and right for Britain. But there is something uncanny about the silent almost dreamlike way in which these enormous changes are wrought. For the course on which we have embarked goes right against our traditions and history.

The leader continued :

It is time for us to change our rôle. This does not mean an abdication. Our greatest adventure lies ahead, if we but seize our chance and refuse to petrify in a rôle which has had its day. We return to Europe at a millennial turning-point of Europe's, as well as of our own, history—at the very moment when Europe struggles to recover its Roman unity ; and we happen to be so placed that it will largely depend on us whether that unity is achieved.

We are only one among Europe's nations, not the largest in numbers, no more than the equal of the others in civilization and technical experience ; but we are peculiarly situated. Geography makes us an inevitable citadel of the new Europe ; language appoints us as the natural link between Europe and America ; and political association puts us at the junction between the old nations of Europe and the new nations of the Commonwealth which so obviously need and complement one another.

### An Understanding of Europe

**T**HIS change in British policy, and our future co-operation with the countries of Western and Southern Europe, needs to be supplemented by a British effort to understand Europe, to think in the European way. The British do not generally realise how far they have drifted apart from the Continent. This was due in the first place to British history, which took them overseas, gave them large possessions in other continents and assured to them the carrying trade of the world. But it is due also to the religious and cultural break with Europe during the sixteenth century. This introduced a new English culture, resentful or oblivious of the older English culture that had grown and flourished through a millennium of England's Catholic belief and experience. This break away from Europe has had lasting and unfortunate consequences, and not alone in the domain of religion. For as the influence of Catholicism declined in England, and the adherents of the Catholic Church were persecuted and penalised, Englishmen came gradually to despise, because they misunderstood, Catholicism ; as a result they also undervalued European culture, which had its roots and inspiration in the old faith. The religious changes of the sixteenth century were not *wholly* or even *mainly* religious. They were a gesture of *nationalism*, as in England,

where royal authority would no longer submit to spiritual jurisdiction from outside ; of the *new controlling classes*, anxious to possess themselves of the Church's landed property ; or of *revolt*, in the name of regional churches or of individual consciences, against the traditional conception of an established Church of Christ. They were a movement of disintegration. They were a *break-away* ; and this, in the long run, meant a *break-up* of the older harmony of Europe. Once the process had set in it continued everywhere. The great European Powers acted towards one another as conscious of nothing but their own interests and convenience, each deeming itself to be completely sovereign, and acting with little, if any, sense of European solidarity and responsibility. The ruinous consequences of two World wars, which began as European wars, show how tragic and terrible has been this movement of disintegration, and how absolutely necessary it now is to restore a European harmony.

It is here, I think, that Catholics in Britain have a task which they are particularly fitted to fulfil. This is to bring home to their fellow countrymen the significance of Europe or, in other words, to show them the implications of the new foreign policy. They can do this on different levels. First culturally, by emphasizing the British contribution and the British debt to European culture ; by stressing the European character—that is, the Catholic character—of many British institutions, e.g. her universities, her Common Law, her jealous hold upon tradition ; also by showing how great a part was played by Britain in medieval history and civilization. Our cathedrals and pre-Reformation village churches, our university colleges, like Balliol and Christ's Church, Oxford, and King's College at Cambridge, our schools such as Winchester and Eton—these are all witnesses to Britain's European and Catholic past. It has been stated, though all such judgments are arbitrary, that the three greatest English poets, Chaucer, Shakespeare and Dryden, are all three of a Catholic mentality. Whatever be the validity of that judgment, our literature has been always inspired, and frequently very markedly influenced, from the Continent. Even that Protestantism of England which has set her apart from the Continent has been a Protestantism still treasuring many of the old Catholic prayers and devotions—has been, in fact, a brand of Protestantism very different from that of Sweden or of Northern Germany.

### Catholic Influence in Europe

ON another level British Catholics can explain the importance of Catholic thought and philosophy, and its influence upon the political situation on the Continent. I have on several occasions underlined the significance of the Christian political parties in post-war Europe and have tried to show how they represent the real European stand against Communism. The recent triumph of the Christian Democrats in the Italian elections should have brought this home effectively. It is idle to argue that, under other circumstances,

Signor de Gasperi's party might have received fewer votes. For we are dealing precisely with present circumstances, and in these circumstances the Christian Democrats received roughly one half of all the Italian votes. There are many other countries on the Continent where it is clear that these Centre Christian parties are playing the chief political rôle, and it should be remembered that, in a reconstituted Western and Southern Germany, a similar party, that of the Christian Democratic Union, would be predominant.

It is necessary to insist upon all this, because there are British ministers and spokesmen who continue to talk about a United Socialist States of Europe. They usually commit the fault of identifying the British Labour Party with Socialist parties of the Continental stamp—an error which vitiates the rest of their argument ; for there is a deep-seated difference between the Labour Party, with its Christian antecedents and support, and those Socialist parties which truly take their stand upon the Marxist ideology. They commit a second error in supposing that the Western European countries are anxious to be Socialist. A short study of recent election results will show that in practically every Continental country Socialism is on a sharp decline. Its more radical members have gone further Left towards Communism. The Nenni Socialists, for instance, in Italy have made common cause with Communism ; the Saragat Socialists secured one eighth of the number of votes given to the Christian Democrats.

If this unreal talk were abandoned, and Labour ministers could assess the political forces on the Continent in their true light and according to their proper strength, they would understand that the parties they have to work with in the common task of restoring European economy and security are, in the main, parties with a definite Christian, that is Catholic, background. They would soon discover that the programmes of these Catholic parties are very similar to their own—that is, to the Labour programme as interpreted by the reasonable Labour member and not by the near-Communist fringe to the Left—and with such parties they would be able to work very well. Yet not to the exclusion of Socialist parties ; for in the critical situation of to-day co-operation between Christian and Socialist parties on the Continent is a proposition far more practical and easy than ever before.

In an article on April 24th, *The Times* said pertinently :

It is the tragedy of Italian Socialism that Signor Nenni cannot or will not see what Signore Saragat and Silone see—whatever the verbal protestations and conventions of anti-clericalism may require—that Italian Socialism has no future except one shared with the Christian Democrats.

The French and Dutch Socialists know that their destiny is linked with that of the Christian parties.

It is most important that these truths should be emphasized when men talk about collaboration with European countries.



### A Christian Campaign.

THE need for an understanding of Europe in the light of the faith that created Europe, and of the ideals and outlook for which Europe, properly considered stands, was emphasized at the Albert Hall meeting of some weeks ago. Commenting on this meeting the *News Chronicle* declared: "The common heritage of Western civilization is our anchorage, and its preservation is our purpose." It quoted the words of Sir Stafford Cripps: "It is the soul and culture of Western Europe that has been the mainspring of its contribution to world civilization, and it is to the reinvigoration of that soul that we must bend out energies if we are to succeed. We are embarking on a crusade in which our material means must be directed by our spiritual vision."

It is important to remember that the new approach of Britain to Western Europe, and the closer association of Western European countries, should not be thought of exclusively in terms of economic recovery, or of defence against Russia. That would be to use the notion of "Europe" for immediate ends. What is more necessary is an appreciation of what Europe fundamentally was and is. Europe is the centre and hearth of what we know as the civilization of the West: the greatest cultural achievement man has ever realized. And this achievement springs, in the first instance, from the Christian faith of the men who worked for it, and the Christian spirit in which they worked. It is idle to talk about European liberalism and humanism as though they were the foundation of the European spirit: Europe was founded upon an older and a Christian reality. And when we speak of Europe we mean, not only Western Europe, but Europe whole and entire. The Eastern European peoples, at present under Soviet control, are every bit as European as their Western brethren. The Pole is as European as the Frenchman; the Hungarian as European as the Swiss. If there be countries, such as Italy and France, that have given a larger contribution than the others to the common European heritage, that has been their privilege arising from their special advantages. But no European people is excluded from the common inheritance.

It is greatly to be hoped that in Britain a regular campaign will be instituted to make people aware of this European heritage. Here—as I have already said—Catholics have a large responsibility. For one weakness of the Western democracies has been their lack of positive faith in their own spirit and manner of life. They are anti-Communist; they value democracy; but they value it all too frequently for its many conveniences, for the freedom which it provides from State, or police, or political interference, rather than for the positive, and positively Christian, philosophy which underlies it. Yet it is by this philosophy that the Western countries will ultimately triumph or fall: the philosophy of the human person, with a final destiny to be realized in a world to come, with the personal dignity



which this destiny demands. That philosophy involves, therefore, a belief in certain inalienable rights and liberties with which neither State nor political party may properly interfere : freedom of association, of family life and privileges, of individual enterprise and initiative. This philosophy is underwritten and underpinned by the Christian revelation, and protected by Christian belief. That is why Socialism can never be in any real sense the champion of the European spirit.

An article in *The Times* for April 24th commented wisely on the theme of the "Crisis of the West." It made, and missed, many points. Among those it missed were the following. It spoke of "Christian Churches," with a capital "C," whereas Europe was established by the one Christian Church. It is the division of Europe into these so-called "churches" that has imperilled the understanding of what Europe is, as it disrupted Europe's ancient unity. The article mentioned without disapproval men who reject Christian theology but adhere to much of the morality that derives from it. Here again is a fallacy : that you can be Christian without definite belief, and that you may pick and choose as you please among the ideals and principles of Christianity. The Christian revelation, in the mind of Christ, was something that had to be accepted entire. A selective attitude is, in the long run, the equivalent of rejection.

To-day there are many who reject the full Christian truth, not deliberately or through their own fault, but because of the long-standing division of Europe into "churches." While they have lost hold of the full Christian theology, they retain a Christian philosophy ; they think in a Christian, indeed in a Catholic, way without being conscious how Christian and Catholic it really is. The political return of Britain to Europe should give us opportunities of showing them how the Christian philosophy is incomplete without that full theology which is at once its crown and its guarantee.

### The Congress of Europe

THE Hague congress held in early May did not, as it could not, result in tangible decisions. But for all that it was a timely and a valuable gesture. It stressed the need for European union. What form this union should take is another question. We are at the moment faced with immediate issues of the gravest kind which have to be confronted and overcome. Our present need is for the closest co-operation possible between the Western European nations. Co-operation can be had ; discussions about future federation, while they emphasize the importance of collaboration, may dissipate the energy that is required for immediate action.

A Federation of Western Europe may be a desirable objective. But it is one which, of its nature, cannot be improvised. It could be achieved satisfactorily only after a long experiment in common effort. What is imperative at present is the common effort, and this—one is glad to say—is fast becoming a reality.

Despite their long historical experience together, the peoples of Europe are highly differentiated. Therein lies their strength ; thence has sprung the variety of their contributions to European civilization. At the same time it has been their weakness : out of it have come their many wars, their mutual misunderstandings. No system or scheme will bridge these differences. These peoples can come together in political federation only after they have worked closely together in political and cultural association. What is now wanted is the will to collaborate, coupled with an agreement to differ where difference is inevitable, and an honest effort to understand.

None the less, European congresses, of The Hague category, serve a most valuable purpose. They maintain the conviction that Europe is one whole. They stress the elements which make for contact and association : even when they appear to give them an undue significance, or to dismiss too hastily the problems springing from that variety within unity which is the characteristic of Europe.

### An Education Suggestion

MUCH could be done to cultivate European understanding and solidarity through a change in our university system of education. In Britain, for instance, a young man enters a university, spends there three or four years, and takes his university degree. During that period he rarely if ever comes into contact with any other university, either in Britain or abroad.

The German system, at least in pre-Nazi days, was more elastic. A student entered, let us say, the University of Berlin and studied there for one year. Then, during the next two years he might pass a *semester* or academic half year, or even two or three *semesters*, in the universities of Heidelberg, Freiburg, Bonn or Tübingen. Finally, he would return to his original university to finish his course and take his final examination.

Would it not be possible for undergraduates—particularly in the "Arts" schools of classics, history and languages—to do a portion of their studies regularly at some university in Western Europe? The advantages for the student of modern languages are obvious. It could be equally beneficial for the student of classics or history. Naturally some knowledge of the appropriate foreign language would be necessary, but the project might be a stimulus to a more practical study of foreign languages in British schools. To begin with it should not be impossible for exchange arrangements to be made between specific universities : between London and Paris, for example ; between Cambridge and Louvain, and—if Western Germany be at once included—between Oxford and Heidelberg and Freiburg ; then, also between some other British university and Milan or Rome. No doubt, it would be necessary to co-ordinate syllabuses, but this would be no great problem if the advantages of such a scheme were sufficiently appreciated. If the British are to work in close liaison

with the peoples of Western Europe their educational systems might well be linked together. Summer schools and intermittent visits, with occasional scholarships, are excellent ; but they do not go far enough, or affect a sufficient number of students. A regular interchange of university students, running into many hundreds and prolonged over a period of at least a year, would do a great deal to promote mutual understanding and respect.

Incidentally, such a measure would be a return to the older European conception of university studies. For during the Middle Ages the University of Paris, to take but one example, drew its students from every European country. It was a *university* not only in the sense that it taught all subjects, but also because it taught them to students of every nationality. It was not a French, but a European, institution.

Before and since the second World War much has been achieved through interchange, for the holidays, of school boys and girls between Britain and the Continent. This is an admirable and fruitful experiment which could be developed even more widely.

### Glancing Backwards

A GLANCE backwards over recent moves in the struggle between West and East shows that the Western front is more definitely consolidated, and also that the Western forces have won a number of significant victories. The greatest factor for hope in these critical post-war years is the firmer attitude of the Western Powers towards Russia. Firmness will not bring war nearer. A strong policy which, while not provocative, is determined and leaves the Russians in no doubt about the readiness of the Western peoples to defend themselves, is the policy most likely to avert actual warfare. Compromise has had its day ; and it has been a very disastrous day for Western countries, and yet more so for the peoples of Eastern Europe who have been its principal victims. This fact requires emphasis because of the streak of compromise in the British character. When General Marshall, recently, rejected the Russian overtures for a two-Power discussion of differences between the U.S.A. and Russia, some British papers were alarmed and critical. General Marshall was right, and the papers mistaken. If the Russian leaders desire serious co-operation with other governments, even though from their side it be nothing but a change of tactics, they have plenty of opportunities for such co-operation in the United Nations Organization, for example, and in the committees which should be preparing treaties of peace with Austria and Germany. The general objective of Russian policy is as clear as day. It will not, indeed it cannot, alter ; though the tactics used may vary from toughness to conciliation. Much has been gained by our recognition of this reality, and by the determination to face its consequences.

It was the partition of Czechoslovakia in the Nazi interest, at Munich, and the subsequent German invasion of Czechoslovakia,

which made it clear to Britain and France that the next German move of aggression would mean war. It has been the Russian seizure of Czechoslovakia which has, once again, placed the Western countries in a similar pre-war atmosphere. One step further on the part of Russia, and what would be the consequences?

Since that Russian coup, we have witnessed the rapid consolidation of the Western European countries; the declaration of President Truman that the U.S.A. will assist their defence programmes; the effort to bring all Western countries (with one unfortunate example, on which I have more than once commented) into what is, for all practical purposes, a Western alliance. This is a policy of realism, and such, in times as difficult as these, is necessary and welcome.

Entering into detail, one can remark that the Russians have, for the time being, lost the battle they were waging in Berlin. The three Western Powers remain there. The Russian tactics were clumsy, and their failure has harmed Russian prestige. It is highly important for the U.S.A., France and Britain to maintain their position in Berlin: not because there is much likelihood of restoring Four-Power collaboration, but for the reason that the people of Berlin have pinned their faith to the Western Powers. Any Western retreat would leave the people of Berlin to Russian mercies. Besides, the Russians are planning to organize Eastern Germany as a Communist State, with one political party, and to exclude all Western influence. As long as the Western Powers keep their position in Berlin the Russian plan cannot be effectively carried through.

The Russians have also lost, and very evidently, the battle for Italy. The defeat of the Popular Front in the Italian elections was so convincing that the Christian Democrats have, by themselves, a majority in the Italian Parliament. The Italian people have made it abundantly clear in which direction they consider that their country must work out its future destiny. The Italian vote was so decisive that Italian Communists are unlikely to be able further to hinder (save now and then by strikes and sabotage) the democratic development of Italy in close conjunction with other Western countries.

### **The Tragedy of Palestine**

**A**LL Christians, and not they only, have been saddened and made anxious by the situation in Palestine. I have always felt that the situation ought never to have been created, and that the Zionist experiment, encouraged by the British Government, should never have been initiated. It has now culminated in tragedy. It will certainly be the centre of international manœuvring. It might even issue in a third World War.

The British forces have left Palestine, where for the past two years their task of carrying out the Mandate has been made extremely difficult owing to the violence of Jewish terrorist societies and the non-co-operation of the Jewish settlers. It has seemed, to many, that



British policy with respect to this continued violence has erred on the side of mildness, and that the violence should have been met with stronger measures.

It is unfortunate that the United Nations Organization has not been able to find a solution of the Palestine problem, and has not, to date, taken up any practical position towards it. Nor has the shifting attitude of the United States Government been helpful. Nothing but confusion was occasioned by the decision of that Government to advocate partition, then the withdrawal of that decision, and finally Mr. Truman's recognition of the Jewish State in Palestine as a *de facto* political reality. Mr. Truman's action was too obviously motivated by domestic American affairs in this year of the Presidential election.

Meanwhile the Arab countries to the North, East and South of the Holy Land have taken military action against the Jews. This they declared was a measure necessary to protect the Palestinian Arabs from the Jewish attacks upon Arab settlements.

It is notoriously difficult to discover the proper solution of this problem. The Jews demand partition and have declared themselves to constitute an independent State. Whether that State is viable and can fulfil the conception of a State is another matter. Should that State continue to exist, it must expect Arab opposition and hostility from every side until, by the influence of the great Powers, some kind of compromise can be attained. The Arabs do not care for compromise and strongly oppose partition; for they realize that a Jewish State would open its doors to widespread immigration, and would shortly dominate the whole of Palestine. This, in fact, is the declared objective of the Jewish terrorist societies.

International repercussions are to be feared. One of the motives behind the recognition by the United States of the Jewish State was, doubtless, a desire to forestall Russia. The governments of the Russian-controlled countries of Eastern Europe are likely to accord a similar recognition: in part because Jewish influence is marked in many of these governments, and also because much of the illegal immigration into Palestine has been promoted from these countries. Russia herself may bide her time; but here again her policy is probably pro-Jewish and anti-Arab. The Arabs assert that Russian officers have been training the Jewish forces, and that many Communists have recently infiltrated into Palestine. One of Russia's chief designs is to penetrate into the Eastern Mediterranean. The Palestine emergency will scarcely be neglected.

In Christian eyes the troubled condition of Palestine brings fears for the safety of the holy places. Cardinal Griffin has suggested that the care of these sacred spots should be entrusted to regiments of Christian volunteers. Once, the Christian West sent its crusaders to rescue those places from Moslem occupation. The Christian world might well send new crusaders to protect them from the ravages of modern war.



## ITALIAN SANCTITY

### II.

**A**T first it seemed possible to distinguish between 'Roman' and 'Italian' characteristics—between a certain brutality, and robustness; grandeur and beauty; hardness and common-sense; sarcasm and good-natured humour and so forth. It was difficult to find reflections of these in Saints themselves, if only because Rome as such produced hardly any: even St. Philip Neri was a Florentine; St. Pius V, a Piedmontese. When the Greek Renaissance arrived, there was a great ebullience of life, but it almost at once conventionalized religious life itself: men's native wit did not suffice—they had to strain after epigram: even Latin was written with real spontaneity by relatively few—classical models had to be imitated: and Popes, who naturally wanted to fill their courts with the most brilliant of *littérateurs*, almost without noticing it became surrounded by men who not only revelled in the ancient arts but were inspired by pagan ideas and were worse than pagan-wise immoral, for most of them still masqueraded as Christian at least officially. Moreover the development of Nationalisms not only began to turn faith into an affair of frontiers, but necessitated the Popes' becoming princes among other rival princes, equipped with vast staffs of lawyers, diplomats and bureaucracies. Even apart from the extravagance of so many prelates, all this was enormously expensive and money-making became even more unscrupulous than before. I hardly like to use the word 'Counter-Reformation' of the great wave of sanctity that soon enough welled up; for the first efforts were directed much more towards domestic reform than towards checking what was happening in Germany—in fact, the Protestant revolutions were but slowly taken with any seriousness in Rome: it was not seen that popular *piety* existed and demanded more than was given it; the would-be reformers seemed to supply, at first, what the official Church would not: and though disillusionment very soon set in, the revolts seemed to be more social than religious.

St. Francis of Paula (d. 1507), a humble Calabrian, began a reform of the Franciscans, calling his friars the 'Minims.' The gentle Saint was sent by the Pope to help Louis XI to die, and his successors refused to let go of him. His incorrupt body was burnt by the Calvinists in 1562. But now that historical records become so much richer, it is quite hopeless so much as to name all the Beati who adorn once more the older Orders. The first Italian to found a new 'order' was Gaetano (Cajetan) of Vicenza, who died in 1547: along with Bishop Caraffa of Chieti he founded the Clerks Regular (Theatines, after his family name) and organized an incredible number of charitable works,

not least a hospital for incurables : there cannot but be some latent connection between him and Camillus de Lellis (d. 1614) also from the Chieti diocese. Of him in a moment. St. Antonio Maria Zaccaria (1539) founded at Milan another order of Clerks Regular, the Barnabites ; and St. Jerome Aemilian, a Venetian (1537), did the same sort of 'charitable' work with a quite modern efficiency, taking special care of orphans whom he not only rescued but educated. The only woman, I think, who founded an Order at this time for teaching girls was St. Angela Merici, (1540) a North Italian like most of those others : her Ursulines are a very efficient educational force still to-day.

But the main educational force of the time was the new Society of Jesus which for long retained a Spanish colouring : historians who relate this period and gloat over its splendours and wickedness, ought not to forget the whole armies of young men who in almost every land flocked to the standard of the Basque Ignatius, eager for knowledge, poverty, chastity and martyrdom. The fact that Aloysius Gonzaga (1591) struggled to abdicate his princedom and to eclipse himself, he thought for ever, in this Society which took a vow against accepting honours, will have added enormous momentum to Italian vocations.' Few Saints have been so travestied by later hagiographers as this ironcast youth : it is indeed part of the 'conventionalism' that I mentioned, that biographers and pictures more and more had to agree with a formula, especially if princely relatives survived whom no man dared criticize. Aloysius's spiritual director, however, the Tuscan Robert Bellarmine (1621) stands out very personally : not only he stated with exceptional clarity the theory of the Papacy ; not only he managed his vast erudition with a serenity in startling contrast with the vituperative methods then in vogue, but his treatment of the 'divine right of kings' with special reference to James I of England foreshadowed not only the inevitable expulsion of the Jesuit Society from lands where ministers preached Absolutism, but quite modern controversies as to the rights of the State over the human personality. Another North Italian nobleman and Cardinal was Charles Borromeo (1584) : only 46 when he died, he has exercised an enduring influence throughout the Church by means of his catechism : he is another example of a man who might have been the worst of nepotists, a greedy plutocrat, and yet, in the highest rank short of the Papacy, lived in personal poverty and total abnegation.

The Sicilian Andrew Avellino was Charles's close friend and became a Theatine (1608). In charming contrast was the education given by St. Felix à Cantalice, a farm-labourer in the Abruzzi, to thousands of the children there, who followed with love this simple lad as he went through fields and hills singing his naïve lore (1587) ; while in 1608 died Francis Carracciolo who did, by his clerks regular, for Rome and Naples what Gaetano and Zaccaria had done in Lombardy. Out of the constellation of Saints belonging roughly to this period, let us

recall St. Francis de Geronimo (1716), a Neapolitan missionary and social 'reformer' to whose life Fr. D'Elia's volumes will soon do belated justice: the Umbrian Capuchin, Joseph of Leonessa (1612) who on a mission to the Turks was captured, nailed by one hand and one foot to a gibbet, was saved, and returned to continue his missionary work among the very poor: the lovable St. Bernardino Realini, of Lecce, the only Saint I know of who was officially chosen patron of his town before his death (1616)—he never could keep his walking-stick . . . it was always being stolen as a relic: Antonio Baldinucci, a Jesuit (1717), was another missionary on a wide scale, but apt to use those dramatic methods which disconcert us northerners and seem at times almost barbaric, unlike the enthusiasts even of Spain, to say nothing of France, though methods there too could be quaint enough (e.g. as used by Breton missionaries, to say nothing of exorcists).

Going back for a moment, I recall two outstanding men—Philip Neri (1515–1595) and Camillus de Lellis (1550–1614). The former, as austere yet as gentle as Francis de Sales, jocular and unconventional to the point of eccentricity, loved God and was loved by his fellow-men as few beside him: love, in him, runs its whole gamut, from the most mystical—during an ecstasy in the Catacombs he found two ribs forced out of place by his violently palpitating heart—down to almost embarrassing friendliness (Ignatius of Loyola lamented that he had no buttons left on his cassock, so would Philip hold to them and wriggle them about while he talked), and indeed down to his pet cat. His influence on the youth of Rome was unlimited: he loved music and founded the Oratory. The gigantic Camillus, a wild soldier, a maniac gambler, suffering from terrible illnesses, was converted and guided for a while by Philip. He was in a true sense originator of the Red Cross, and his Order which nurses the sick is still in benediction the world around.

I like to commemorate, with him, Bernard of Corlione (1667), a shoemaker, but a great fighter. Having impaled an officer with his rapier, he took sanctuary in a church and could not come out till he announced that he would join the Capuchins. He did so, and at once became an ecstatic and miracle-worker of a kind proper to his age—as St. Gregory says about the apparition on the way to Emmaus: "The Truth showed itself such, in bodily form, as it existed within them in their minds." His methods of apostolate too were appropriate to that naïve yet sophisticated age. He took a Knight, whom he perceived to be filled with sensual thoughts, into the Friars' cemetery, and, removing the cover of a coffin, displayed in considerable detail a decaying corpse. The Knight's mind was cleansed. After 35 years of an extremely religious life, and aged 62, he knew he was going to die at 9 in the evening of Jan. 12th, 1667, having been ill a week. He got rid of tearful visitors, sat down on the edge of his bed and pulled his hood over his eyes, asked for the Passion and the prayers for the dying

to be read to him, and kept asking if it was 8 o'clock. At 9, he said : " Let us go ; let us go," and died. This true son of St. Francis had been singularly fond of dumb animals ' who had neither doctors nor medicine nor tongue with which to explain their needs ' : they were brought to him in crowds—' Man and beast shalt Thou save, O Lord ' (Ps. 35, 7), and he cured them by a *Pater*. (I have used the Life by the Capuchin Benedetto Sanbenedetti, O.M. Cap., Palermo, 1725.) And only four years before him had died (1663) that most disconcerting Franciscan Joseph of Cupertino. By miraculous chances he survived the ordination examinations, and without any doubt became the most amazing of ' levitation-Saints.' Almost any holy thought sent him flying into the air, with a great cry. The thing became, certainly, a nuisance to his Superiors, and (dare we say ?) almost a comedy. He had to be sent from convent to convent, such were the crowds who beset him ; the Inquisition itself was more than once concerned about him. His rather heavy, weary features are well preserved to us.

Only two women Saints, I think, of this period need be mentioned—St. Hyacinth de Mariscottis (1640). A frivolous girlhood, including an ephemeral conversion after sickness : furious when her lover jilted her for a younger sister, she accepted her father's angry suggestion that she should enter a convent ; but on condition that he furnished for her an elegant cell in the garden. Again and again she fell sick, vowed conversion, relapsed, till in middle age she was genuinely changed, became austere, organized help for the sick and poor and died most holily. Add, the wonderful ecstasica Mary Magdalen de' Pazzi (1607), a Carmelite : the moment we think the ' visionary ' records of such Saints seem incoherent or even hysterical, we are pulled up by the sanity of their correspondence and the clear-sightedness of their more theoretical writings. But perhaps there is more *bonhomie* in the Italian Saints than the wittier and, as a rule, remorselessly practical French, and certainly the relentless and supremely individualist Spaniards : but these comparisons would take us much too far.

In the detestable later 18th century and the first part of the 19th the artificial reached its worst, as shown by the progressive enfeeblement of baroque art and architecture ; and so did the baseness of anti-clericalism itself. We now see how shoddy the ' Enlightenment ' was, the more despicable for its extreme conceit. The Saints of the period mark a violent reaction. St. Paul of the Cross (1755) founded the Passionists and was a preacher-Saint of terrible penances. So was St. Leonard of Port Maurice (1751), though a man of singularly sweet character : his favourite devotion was the Way of the Cross. So once more was the austere Ischian, Joseph of the Cross (1751), and the ecstasica Mary Frances of the Five Wounds (1791) and Veronica de Julianis (1727). And in 1764 died St. John Baptist Rossi, a Genoese, but labouring in and around Rome for shepherds, labourers, prisoners, prostitutes, the sick, himself dying in hospital. He is a glory for the



Roman secular clergy. But I think it possible that if one cannot discern so much personality in the Saints of this period, that may be due to the collapse of biography at the time, in which historical sense had vanished, and mannerisms predominated. Well before this, indeed, accurate quotation had disappeared in favour of literary embellishments, and the wish to 'edify' even at the cost of truth. One is almost sorry for these Saints, whose terrific lives of penance were a protest against that worldliness which is at its most ugly when it is dressed in religious disguise. Still, the life of St. Alfonso de' Liguori (1787), founder of the Redemptorists, is of intense interest. He lived during a period of shocking mis-government when Italy, divided among so many rulers, was not the least chaotic of lands. The absolutism of Bourbon ministers, which wrecked, for a while, the Jesuits to whom he was devoted, divided his own Order too, and for a while he found himself outside it. It is pathetic that this extremely sensitive man, who has been of such spiritual help to so many, not only was almost blind and bent double in his old age (he died at 91) but suffered bitterly from scruples and all manner of temptations. Too many, perhaps, think of him as a technical moralist, though when his legal training together with his vivid perception of spiritual realities enabled him to perceive where right or wrong existed, he took little account, said he, of books. Animals loved him, and came to him when they fled from all others.

With the Bd. Gaspare del Bufalo, a Roman (1837), we pass to the border-line of the modern age, though his work lay so largely among brigands still infesting the mountains. This brought him into conflict even with papal officials, and he was always in trouble with some government or other. His congregation of the Precious Blood came near to extinction; it is a true miracle that a man by nature so irascible and self-willed learned to contemplate the probable ruin of his life's work and his own disgrace by calumny, without a murmur. He did great work among the very poor in and around Rome.

From now on, names abound, though perhaps I should have mentioned first St. Gerard Majella, from S. Italy, a Redemptorist laybrother (d. 1755; canonised only in 1904) whose austerities and mystical life were equal to anything in older days; and St. Gabriel dell'Addolorata, an Umbrian Passionist, having been rather a frivolous young student, an admirable actor, dancer and versifier: he died in 1862, aged 24. An amazing outbreak of devotion after the death of this unknown youth hastened his beatification, at which not only a brother of his and his confessor were present, but—unique detail, perhaps!—the old lady who long ago had been destined to marry him. Impossible to dwell on the life of St. John Bosco (1888), the Piedmontese founder of the Salesian society and that of Our Lady Help of Christians (women): a poor shepherd himself, he accomplished a work for poor boys—homes, schools, industrial institutions—far higher in ideal and efficiency than



others much more often quoted : Andrew Beltrami (1897) a member of his society extended his interests to the universities : Leonardo Murialdo (1900), also of Turin, founded another working-boys' congregation and was an expert journalist ; and Ludovico Pavoni, a Brescian nobleman (1849) worked chiefly among deaf-mutes. From Turin again came Joseph Cottolengo (1842) who created out of nothing a perfect town of charity of all sorts—the ' Little House of Providence ' : a member of the Third Order of St. Francis, he relied as wholly upon God as did the Saint of Poverty. Among men given to the active missionary life, I recall the Brescian Innocent à Bertio (1890), a Franciscan ; the artist Barnabite, Fortunato Redolfo (1850) ; Felix de Andreis, another Torinese (1820), the Founder of the Society of the Mission in America—but I see that this is resolving itself into a mere catalogue of names : Contardo Ferrini, the lawyer-historian and heir of Mommsen, was canonised in 1947, and we look forward to the raising to the altars of the mining-engineer Pier Giorgio Frassati and the psycho-analyst Dr. Necchi.

Among holy women I may mention—picking a few names almost haphazard—Constantia Cerioli (1865), widow of Count Buzzecci-Tassis, foundress of the Sisters of the Holy Family ; and Anna Maria Lapini of Florence (1860) who founded a society for poor girls. Aloisia Borgiotti of Turin (1873) began the wonderful society of Jesus of Nazareth for nursing the sick at home ; at Brescia, Maria Crocifissa di Rosa founded the Servants of Charity and Caterina Volpicelli at Naples also did creative work for nursing. In a different order, Anna Maria Taigi, a Siennese who married a Roman servant (1837) and, while fulfilling all her duties as wife and mother, became an astonishing ecstasica, as did the Franciscan Tertiary Philomena Ioanna Genovese (1864). And who can forget the child Gemma Galgani (1878–1903) whose canonisation was, like that of her sister of Lisieux, hurried on because of irresistible popular devotion ! Would I had room for that sweet Visitation sister, Benigna Consolata Ferrero, from Turin (d. 1916)—as it were an apostle-in-aridity of the love of the S. Heart ; for Mother Antonia Verna, foundress of the Ivrea Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception (1838) : but I dare not omit M. Francis Xavier Cabrini, tiny, indomitable, never to be asked ' only for the possible ', for whom " New York is far too small " . . . (that will have enchanted the U.S.A. who now claim her as a good American !). Her story crackles with Italian humour—she could laugh even when being slung like a sack over crevasses in the Andes snows. A fascinating life. She died in 1917.

We can hardly fail to see how high a proportion of these men and women come from North Italy, and secondarily, I think from the Neapolitan area. Also, while the line of mystics is not broken, how extremely practical the majority of these Saints (or, we hope without presuming, Saints-to-be) have revealed themselves to be. (We trust

that the myth of Italian inability to be 'practical'—quite apart from questions of holiness—will fade.) But never did practical activity interfere with their prayers: nor their robust common-sense with their almost childlike trust in God, nor did their charity ever degenerate into philanthropy: they never worked for the coming of Man's kingdom upon earth. Since then all this spiritual current flowed so strong during the atrocious generations of misrule in Italy and the deep and cynical corruption of Freemasonry and other forms of anti-clericalism, we may look forward to the same strong tide, possibly breaking all bonds the more it is repressed, during whatever trials Italy may have in store. And we pray that at least one Pope—Pius X—may some day be ranked among those Saints who pray both for the Universal Church, and for Rome and Italy in particular!<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I hope to write at rather greater length on three priests—Bd. Antonio Maria Gianelli, bishop of Bobbio (1789-1846); St. Giuseppe Catusso (1811-1860), and Don Oreste Fontenella (1883-1935), to indicate the continuity of priestly virtue through a period of difficult transition.

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#### SHORT NOTICE

'The Priest: His Dignity and Obligations,' the third of the Selected Works of St. John Eudes published in translation by P. J. Kenedy & Sons, New York, under the joint editorship of Fathers W. Myatt and P. Skinner, C.J.M., of the Holy Heart Seminary, Halifax, N.S., is entitled **The Priest: His Dignity and Obligations**. The treatise, all comprised in two hundred and eighty clearly-printed and well-spaced pages, is in seven parts, each of which is really a complete work in itself. The Saint has neglected and overlooked nothing in a priest's life that concerns either his own sanctification or his direction and help of souls. Thus very practical advice is given about his Mass, Office, Meditation, Spiritual Reading, as well as for his preaching, visiting, teaching the catechism and so forth. The third part on a 'Good Confessor' is a little masterpiece of ten chapters in less than fifty pages. Thus, writing of the 'Prudence of the Confessor' the Saint says, "Examine the penitent according to age, sex and condition. Be careful not to arouse wrong thoughts or to suggest unknown sins. Do not interrupt him during his confession, but wait until he has finished" (p. 151). "Suggest remedies suitable to each particular soul. Give a penance which will be at once salutary and easy for the penitent. Be lenient rather than harsh in this matter" (p. 152). It will be noticed how wisely sparing of his words St. John Eudes always is. An excellent example of this is to be found both in Part V: 'Meditations on Tonsure and Holy Orders', and in Part VI: 'Meditations for the Annual Retreat', where spiritual reflections and counsels that will be read and re-read with profit are contained within the brief compass of twenty pages. In fact there is a wonderful directness and conciseness about this entire treatise. We should hope many priests will keep it by them as a book to be opened at any page and read with profit at any time.

## HANNIBAL AT THE GATES

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ITALIAN ELECTIONS

**M**ORE than two thousand years ago, the cry went up in Rome : "Hannibal is at the gates." The Carthaginian general had brought his armies across the Alps. He had marched southwards over what later was to be Lombardy. He had crushed the Roman legionaries at Cannae. Could the walls of Rome withstand this dreaded man before whom Rome's soldiery had crumbled? Hannibal was the representative of a way of thought and life that was totally alien from the civilization of Rome. It was a facet—an exotic facet—of the ancient barbarism of Asia, with which Greece already had been in conflict, and the challenge of which Rome now had to face. But in the end Rome prevailed, not Carthage, to the abiding advantage of Europe and humanity. Had Carthage conquered there might never have been what we have known as Europe.

Recently, Italy has withstood—"overcome" would be too optimistic an expression—another and a highly dangerous challenge from representatives of a manner of thought and life entirely at variance with the traditional civilization of Italy. This, too, was a challenge from Asia, from the twentieth-century Asia of North and East, with its militant materialism, its denial of all the old European values, and its cunningly organized technique of disintegration and revolution. This time the challenge came from a double Hannibal : from the red Hannibal of the Kremlin, threatening the people of Italy across the Alps and the Adriatic sea, and from a Hannibal in a Trojan horse, which had already breached the ramparts of Italy and even the very walls of Rome.

The measure of the election triumph of the Italian Christian Democrats was greater even than the optimists had prophesied. In Parliament they have a clear majority of seats over all other parties taken together ; and with other anti-Communist parties they have a majority of more than two to one over the self-styled Popular Front, consisting of the Communists and the groups which travel along with them. The Italian people have made it perfectly evident that they do not want Communism, but will seek for prosperity and salvation within a democratic framework of society ; and that their true affinities are not with Russia, but with France and Britain and with the United States of America, and in general with the free world. The Government of Signor de Gasperi which during the past two years, and in circumstances of acute crisis, has shown marked ability and courage, will now have the chance to plan for the economic recovery and the social and political stability of the country it has been called upon, so decisively, to administer.

That the Italian people realized how grave were the issue at stake, is shown by the heavy proportion of voters, more than ninety-two per cent. The election posters and newspapers of the Christian Democrats and the other anti-Communist parties brought these home to them with consistent vigour. On the other hand, very great efforts have been made by the Italian Communist Party for the past two years to prepare for an election victory, and, incidentally, to confuse the real issues for their own party benefit. For instance, in their campaigns among the peasantry in Southern Italy they assured the people that Communism is not in the least anti-religious, and they even went so far as to interpret their Italian symbol, consisting of the head of Garibaldi within the Soviet five-pointed star, as representing the head of St. Joseph, the saintly working man, surrounded by the star of Bethlehem! In the actual election campaign they disposed of resources not available to other parties. Under a title of legality Russia sent them, recently, ten thousand tons of paper for newsprint and election posters. Italian sources have stated that they received for election expenses from Russia two billion lire in gold.

Yet it was clear, I think, in March that the Communists would not win. Their skilfully arranged propaganda lost much of its potential effect because of several external incidents. Among these, the Communist seizure of Czechoslovakia, and the widespread fear that, in Italy also, the Communists were organizing "Action Groups" on the lines they had utilized in Prague. The Italian people were made conscious again of the Russian drive into Europe by the Soviet pressure upon the Government of Finland, forcing a military alliance upon the Finns. An advance in the North; and in the Centre; was there to be another advance, shortly, in the South?

Other factors were more positive. The Western Powers showed a timely sense of justice in their announcement that Trieste and its territory should be returned to Italy, since the arrangements made with Yugoslavia had been blatantly ignored by the Government of Belgrade. Further, it was made clear that Italy, under a Communist or Popular Front administration, would not continue to receive assistance from the United States and would not be permitted to participate in the advantages of the Marshall Plan. Italian immigrants in the U.S.A. and the Argentine sent many a sack of letters and postcards to relatives and acquaintances in Italy telling them to vote for the Christian Democrats, or other anti-Communist parties, and warning them that a Communist election victory would involve a break between Italy and the New World where Italians are so strongly represented. Rarely can there have been elections in which outside governments and peoples took so lively an interest or realized so clearly the great issues at stake.

Italy, to employ the crisp journalistic expression, has opted for the West. When one reflects on the history and culture of the Italians, it is difficult to imagine how they could ever have opted for anything



else. For, with the *possible*—but only possible—exception of France, Italy has made a larger contribution to Western civilization than any other country. Indeed, I feel inclined to withdraw even that possible exception, for the reason that the civilization of France is derived in the main from the Latin : from Rome, and consequently from Italy.

For you cannot understand Europe without Rome, and Rome in a double significance. Until you comprehend how one small Latin city or people subdued and assimilated sister cities and peoples, and how together they then made a Roman reality of Italy ; until you can have some notion of how that Roman dominion spread through the centuries over all the lands that bordered upon the sea of civilization, the Mediterranean ; until you realize how, despite much crudity and many defects, there was built up a massive *Imperium Romanum*, almost conterminous with the then known world, an *Imperium* that, whatever its shortcomings, gave order and security, was mainly tolerant, and emphasized the ideas of order and law and responsibility : until you realize all this you cannot fully understand the meaning of Europe, or how far go back the origins of that Western civilization which is the proudest cultural inheritance of mankind, and which to-day is so violently assailed in the name of the new ideas. Granted that there were older elements, those for instance from Greece, I still very much doubt whether those would have been handed on had it not been for the Roman genius, which preserved and appreciated what was of value in the older cultures. The *stamp* of old Imperial Rome can still be seen in the lands which felt its influence. This is one of the reasons why the French, the Spaniards and the Italians, the Southern and Western Germans and ourselves are different in so many ways from the Prussians and Scandinavians.

There is a familiar sentence which tells how conquered Greece took captive her proud conqueror Rome through her arts, her philosophy, her many-sided and subtle culture. In a deeper sense, Christianity first permeated and then prevailed over her proud persecutor, Imperial Rome. Upon the ruins of ancient Rome, which, in its time, must have seemed to men so solid in achievement, and so assured of permanence that it could never be dissolved, there rose a *spiritual Rome*, the Rome of the Catholic Church. And this Catholic Church finally created Europe during what historians have spoken of as the Dark Ages, perhaps more through our ignorance of what then was happening than because of the dark qualities of those particular ages. Out of them emerged that epoch of Christian civilization which we term *Christendom*—imperfect, doubtless, in its realization, but never-the-less a period when a certain human harmony was brought about, and a formation given, which none of those countries that experienced them can ever forget, since the marks of the great revolution are still evident in their traditions and habits. Italy herself, and even Rome, passed through centuries of eclipse and chaos. Yet the light always flickered and at



times shone with radiant brightness from the central citadel of that achievement, the *Eternal City* of Rome.

For Rome is the Eternal City. There is no other, except of course, and in a sense that is very different, Jerusalem. Rome belongs in its earthly significance not to one country but to all the peoples who have had their share in Western civilization. This is why it was perhaps foolish on the part of the nineteenth-century makers of modern Italy to insist that Rome should be the capital of the new kingdom. Rome is older than the House of Savoy, older than Garibaldi. It has outlived Savoy and, I think, outlived a great measure of what Garibaldi then represented. And then Rome, in the spiritual sense, is the possession, as it is the inspiration, of those who profess and practise the Catholic faith the whole world over.

But when all is said and done we cannot deny Rome to Italy. With its universal character and appeal it remains peculiarly Italian, and the genius of Rome still has its part to play in the development of Italy.

Here is perhaps the moment to touch upon another Italian characteristic which is particularly *European*. Europe, despite the common experience of its peoples through many centuries, has remained a continent of peoples highly varied and diversified. They have lived together in mutual relationship, sometimes friendly and sometimes not ; but all have shared a common culture and common historical experiences. Yet how different they have remained. When the Englishman thinks of a typical foreigner he pictures, very probably, his neighbour across the slight strip of the English Channel. The English and the French have been close neighbours for a millennium, but how diverse are their mentality and habits, and how different their contribution to the European heritage. To take one other instance : would it not be difficult to find peoples more dissimilar in aptitudes and outlook than Austrians and Bavarians on the one hand, and Italians on the other ; yet they, too, have had close historical contact for many centuries.

Nowhere will you find this variety within a common tradition, this local and regional vitality which never has been toned down to some drab and neutral colour, so conspicuously as in the life of Italy. The older Italian towns had their own customs and cultures as the centres of dukedoms and republics. Milan was different from Venice, as was Florence from Naples. One has only to consider Italian painting to realize how diversified were the schools of Italian art. There was Venice, powerfully affected by the Eastern contacts of its merchants. The Venetian Cathedral of St. Mark could never have been built in Rome or Milan. To Naples came the strong Spanish influence, with its fiercer and more sombre colouring ; so that seventeenth and eighteenth century Neapolitan pictures appear almost more Spanish than Italian. Florence and Milan were centres more purely

Italian. But even here, what diversity? Raphael, with Perugino, for Florence; Leonardo and his school for Milan; and, let us add, Titian and Tintoretto for the Venetians; what wide variety of pattern, and stress, and colour. Yet all are definitely and emphatically Italian.

It is against this Italian background that one reflects upon the recent elections. Among reports received from Italy was one which described in vivid detail the final pre-electoral meetings of the main parties.<sup>1</sup> That of the Communists was held in the large piazza in front of the Basilica of St. John Lateran. The impression this observer had was of a serried and intense mass, hypnotized by the eloquent words of the Italian Communist leader, Togliatti, as they came clear and incisive through the loudspeakers. The spring evening quickened through twilight into night, and the electric lamps threw down their light on the grim upturned faces of his listeners. It is a strange commentary upon the crisis of our days, and on their spirit of restlessness and revolution, that this large Communist gathering should have been held in front of the Lateran Basilica, the *Ecclesiarum Omnium Urbis et Orbis Mater et Caput*, the cathedral church of His Holiness the Pope. And strange, too, that this Communist multitude should have stretched down the long avenue which leads to another ancient and historic church, that of *Santa Croce* with its relics of the cross and its memories of St. Helena.

Our feelings of relief and satisfaction at the election victory must not blind us to the fact that roughly eight million Italians gave their votes to the Communists or their three subsidiary parties. How is it possible, one might ask, that so many members of an intelligent and civilized nation could thus vote away all their traditions, their human and their Christian birthright?

To this question no complete answer can be given. It is part of a wider problem; namely how it is that men and women who have been brought up in the European way of life, with its reasonable liberties and its civilization, can hand themselves over to a system which is the repudiation and antithesis of all this. Not that I for one moment imagine that all who vote Communist are genuine Communists and positively desire a Communist régime in their own country. It is well known that in several North Italian towns the Communist Party was compelled to arrange its meetings late on Sunday mornings, to give time for many of its adherents to go to Mass. In democratic countries a vote is frequently negative rather than positive, against the present Government or the existing condition of things rather than in favour of any very definite policy.

<sup>1</sup> By Monsignor Gustavo J. Franceschi, editor of *Criterio*, a Catholic weekly published in Buenos Aires, who was in Rome before and during the elections. In his account he tells of his audience with the Holy Father at noon on the election day itself. During the audience Pope Pius XII spoke of the day as the "critical moment on which might depend the future of Christian civilization in Western Europe." On the following day, April the 19th, he had an interview with the veteran founder of the Christian Democrats, formerly the *Partito Popolare*, namely Don Luigi Sturzo, who assured him that "it was not possible for the Italian mind and conscience, formed and fashioned by two thousand years of Christianity, in this hour of 'Todo o Nada' (everything or nothing) to apostatize from its ancient beliefs and turn itself towards the 'Nada' or Nihilism of Communism."

In Italy some additional factors have favoured a growth in the number of Communist voters. In the first place the North Italian towns were largely opposed to the Fascist system of Mussolini. For many years the Italian Duce never visited Turin because of the hostility of its workers. The situation in Milan was fairly similar. Then, during the war on Italian soil, the partisan movement in the North was supported and strongly influenced, and in the end largely controlled, by the Communists; as was the case also in France and Yugoslavia. The Communists were looking to the future, to the immediate post-war years, when Soviet Russia intended to make her bid for European domination. This leadership within the partisan movement strengthened the Communist influence in Northern Italy. It was already formidable, for it had helped to keep alive the anti-Fascist spirit of the Northern Italian workers.<sup>1</sup>

In Italy as in France the Communists have succeeded in gaining control of the large Labour Unions. This gives them a power, and a voting strength, which they would never have had if the issues had remained more open. Their propaganda is continuous and very specious. Many working men read nothing but their Communist newspapers, and are accordingly indoctrinated. Agents are there to maintain the pressure, and to urge the solidarity of the working classes against owners and managers, against Government, and sometimes against the Church. Years of agitation, and of denunciation of the existing order, have bred that restlessness among the mass of industrial workers which is one of the most dangerous symptoms of our age. And this restlessness and discontent are not always, and perhaps not mainly, the consequence of unjust wages or poor conditions. They are part of that atmosphere of crisis and revolution in which we have now to live. Many of these men have been conditioned by propaganda into revolutionary material which will be employed by Communist agents, if they judge the time has arrived, in the interests of a foreign Power.

This means that a serious task awaits the de Gasperi Government; and devolves indeed upon all responsible Italians who wish to make a success of Parliamentary democracy. It is a task of re-education. It may be necessary, under certain circumstances, to deal sharply and summarily with Communist leaders and agents. But this is not the entire solution. The rank and file of the workers who have been swayed or beguiled into voting Communist require re-education, and this can come only through their fellow working men. It cannot be imposed from above or it will inevitably fail. The Labour Party in Britain is doing excellent work in convincing the working men of Britain that Communism is both a sham and a peril. In Britain

<sup>1</sup> But it must not be thought that this influence has gone unchallenged. The election figures, for example, in one supposedly Communist town, Sesto San Giovanni, between Milan and Monza—which calls itself the “Stalingrad” of Italy—gave 11,000 votes to the Communist Front but 10,500 votes for the anti-Communist parties.

there is scant likelihood that any considerable proportion of the working class will be seriously affected by Communist propaganda. Here the danger lies elsewhere : in the key positions which some Communists have secured for themselves within the Trades Unions, as also in that fringe of the *intelligenza* which concerns itself with the political life of Britain. There is grave need in Italy of a movement like the *Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne* of Belgium, Switzerland and France.

Conditions in Italy are still difficult, though it is surprising how much recovery there has been during the past two years. The U.S.A. has sent substantial help, and there is no doubt that the American assistance contemplated under the Marshall Plan will improve conditions radically and soon.

A closer association between Italy and the countries now combining to form a Western European Union will bring Italy into more intimate relations with them, and give her a sense of security which she has certainly not enjoyed during the past two years.<sup>1</sup>

But, of course, some major problems have to be faced.

In the first place, the problem of the Italian Communists. As I have suggested above, leaders and agents of this party may require summary treatment. The remainder, or as many as possible of them, must be reintegrated into a democratic form of thought and conduct. Improving conditions throughout the country will assist this to some extent, as will a programme of reforms, measures of social security, and the like. Signor de Gasperi has described his movement—*democristianismo* the Italians call it—as a party of the *Centre*, with a tendency or slant towards the *Left*. His party has the Parliamentary majority which would permit it to govern alone. But this would be unwise and unpractical. The new Government will contain members of the other anti-Communist groups. On immediate measures there will be ready agreement. But difficulties lie ahead, when longer-term plans are discussed. In the eyes of the Socialists who follow Signor Saragat, and of the *Movimento Sociale Italiano*, the full programme of the Christian Democrats is not sufficiently radical. The political groups to the Right of the *democristiani* consider that it goes too far.

That is an internal problem which the new Government must gradually deal with. There are other questions of great significance for Italy, where help and sympathy from outside nations are required.

One of these is emigration. In natural resources Italy is a relatively poor country. Before the 1914-1918 war the number of Italian emigrants, chiefly to the United States and South America, was measured each year, not in tens but in hundreds of thousands. Since 1918 there has been little opportunity for emigration to the U.S.A. and the need

<sup>1</sup> Relations between Italy and these countries have been improving. France and Italy have signed a commercial agreement, for instance. But there have been setbacks, such as the unfortunate incidents early this year at Mogadiscio in East Africa. Writing after these incidents, the *Manchester Guardian* declared that relations between Italy and Britain were worse than at any period since 1943 (March 10th).



for some outlet for a growing population was one of the reasons for the intensive colonisation in Libya. Since the end of the second World War the Government of the Argentine has encouraged a limited emigration from Italy, but this of itself cannot solve the Italian problem. The closer association between Britain, France, Holland and Belgium, on the one hand, and Italy on the other, could bring about a fuller solution. A programme of emigration from Italy, in so far as the Italian Government and people ask for it, encouraged and sponsored by these four countries—to British Commonwealth States and to colonial territories—would help not only Italy; it would be of great service to the lands in which these immigrants would eventually work and settle. Italians, in the main, are excellent settlers; they adapt themselves readily and are soon acclimatized. They have played, for instance, and are playing, a very important part in the development of the Argentine and Southern Brazil.

With this question of emigration goes the as yet unsolved problem of the former Italian colonies. Conflicting claims have been made by other governments to these territories. Abyssinia has demanded Eritrea and Italian Somaliland, while Egypt is claiming Libya. The British Government has made some kind of pledge to the Senussi Arabs. But the atmosphere in which the Italian Peace Treaty was framed and signed has already changed, witness the resolution of Britain, France and the U.S.A. to restore Trieste and its territory to Italian rule. It is not too late to restore some, at least, of the Italian colonies to that same rule or, if that cannot be done, to give Italy the predominant share in an international administration of those areas. Italy is an ex-enemy, though the Italian heart was never in the German alliance or in the war. But Italy is also an ex-ally, during the campaigns on her own soil that brought her much distress and destruction. And Italy is potentially, and soon will be actually, an important ally in the defence of Western civilization and in the struggle for the liberties of the peoples of Europe. The return of the Italian colonies or, at the minimum an Italian administration of those colonies on behalf of the United Nations, would restore Italian self-confidence and prestige and provide a generous example of that collaboration between the free peoples of the Continent which is now so called for.

We must not miss the significant point that on April 18th half the Italian electorate voted for one party, that of the Christian Democrats. It may well be that in circumstances less tense it would have had fewer votes, for—so runs the argument—it was given many votes because it was the strongest anti-Communist party and not for its positive programme. It may also be, as an Italian shrewdly remarked to me, that more would have voted for the Popular Front, were it not for their fear of Russia. There is doubtless truth in these qualifications. But the fact remains that roughly fifty per cent of the Italian voters opted for a party that openly called itself Christian; and this in Italy means Catholic.

If we leave aside the phenomenon of Communism, the most marked political development in post-war Europe has been the growth of Centre Christian parties. Some Christian parties existed before the war, as in Belgium and Holland ; in Austria up to 1938, and prior to 1933 in Germany ; the Italian *Partito Popolare* enjoyed a short span of life after the 1914-1918 war. But the emergence in France of the *Mouvement Républicain Populaire* (M.R.P.) and the resurrection in Italy of the *Partito Popolare* under its more courageous title of *democristiano* require particular emphasis. In France, possibly, the M.R.P. is losing ground to the movement led by General de Gaulle, owing to the strong reaction against Communism. Yet since France's liberation it is the M.R.P. that has played the premier rôle in political life, and it has produced men of the calibre of M. Bidault and the present Prime Minister, M. Schuman. In Italy the Christian Democrats have shown that they can guide and govern on a basis of Christian principles, and with a Christian idealism.

The meaning of this new feature in Continental life needs strongly to be emphasized : above all in Britain where men are slow to understand how Christianity can have an effective influence in public life and where, on the whole, the Catholic philosophy of life is little understood. This emphasis is particularly necessary at the present moment, when Britain is entering into close relations with Continental countries which are for the most part Catholic in religion and culture, and where these Centre political parties exist. The English Press is wont to dismiss such parties as "clerical," as though they were directed and dominated by the clergy—an idea which indicates how sorely English minds require enlightenment upon the framework and fabric of Continental life. For these parties have little to do with the expression "clerical," whatever that expression may really mean. They are political parties, supported by the people as a whole ; they are not Conservative groups. Yet in a manner (and indeed the right manner) they are conservative, because they understand that the European habit of life, with its civilization and its traditions, does merit conservation. Further, they have a philosophy of life, and of man ; and here is the fundamental point where they differ from Communists and from Socialists. For these parties a man is a *person*, with an individual purpose in life that soars high above the political arena ; he has rights and liberties which they realize it is the function of government to respect and preserve ; he has a measure of initiative and personal enterprise of which no State ought to deprive him ; he has a family life and family rights, as well as duties ; he should be able to associate freely with his fellow men. At the same time, these parties are *progressive* in that they understand the necessity for much social reform, and base their social programmes upon the teaching of the Catholic Church, outlined in the great Papal encyclicals. But this programme of reform is adapted to human nature as they view it in

the light of Catholic philosophy and doctrine ; they will not attempt to fit human nature, at any cost and detriment, into some chosen system of reform.

It is these Centre and Catholic parties, more than any other sections, that are to-day fighting the battle of Europe. The other parties which might have sustained the battle are disappearing or are weakened. Liberalism is dying, perhaps is nearly dead, though what was sound amid Liberal concepts will live on. Continental Socialism is on the decline : about this, to my mind, there is no doubt at all, and so I both wonder at and deplore the frequent statements of Labour Party ministers and members who talk about a United Socialist States of Europe, or who imagine that European co-operation is to be largely a game played between the British Labour Party and Continental Socialists. Nothing is further from the reality. In country after country, controlled by Russia, the Socialists have been swallowed by the Communists or, through some of their leaders, have made common cause with them. And a non-Marxist may always and very pertinently ask, where does Socialism stop, and Communism begin. And is not Communism a logical development of Marxist materialistic theories of society and man ? Italy is a case in point ; for the larger portion of the Italian Socialists has made common cause with the Communists in the Popular Front. Signor Nenni stands as a sign that has to be examined before men talk glibly of Socialism as the defence against Communism. And even where such absorption, or such schism, has not occurred the Socialist parties are losing ground, as in France.

For when all is said and done Socialism is no true expression of the European spirit. It is a movement of revolt, which has deliberately ignored or denied the Christian bedrock upon which European civilization was originally built. The peoples of Europe are finding their soul and are realizing that not until they have rediscovered that soul and have understood something of the deep foundations of the European way of life, and the European philosophy of man, will they be able to defend their civilization with the intelligence and the courage for which that defence calls. After all, the roots of our crisis of to-day go very far ; they go down into the moral and spiritual roots of our being. The world is sick, because far too many men and women have been sick with the illnesses of materialism, of relativism, of concentration upon the things that are Caesar's with little serious acknowledgement of the things that are God's.

It is fitting, then, and a source of great hope, that the groups and parties which to-day are the staunchest defenders of the European ways of thought and conduct should be led by convinced and courageous Christians, men who are not afraid to proclaim themselves for what they are, do not hesitate to unfurl the banner under which they serve, and openly manifest the principles which inspire them.

It is particularly fitting that the people of Italy should have given such a decisive proof of their approval to a man of Christian character like Signor de Gasperi, and to his party of Christian Democrats ; for the tradition and civilization of that intelligent and gifted people are profoundly Catholic. The new Government has dangers to confront, and problems to solve ; but it can count on the assistance of the New World, and on the understanding and encouragement of Western Europe, in the performance of its task.

JOHN MURRAY.

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#### SHORT NOTICE

Few Catholics will question the importance of a devotion to the Angels and an awareness of the malice of the devils ; and most will be familiar with the difficulty of achieving either. **Our Friends and Foes** or *The Angels, Good and Bad* (By the Rev. F. A. Houck. Herder Book Co., pp. 254, \$ 1.50) directs our attention to the external causes of "the political evils and universal discontent" of our days, and to external helps to remedy these evils. The first half of the work is devoted to the good Angels, their nature and function. In it references to Scripture and the liturgy are overshadowed by extensive quotations from the *Summa* and *Contra Gentiles* of St. Thomas. The author concedes that "many of the passages might better have been abbreviated or paraphrased, but deliberate preference was made for the very words of St. Thomas himself." The translation used is that of the English Dominicans. While the student familiar with St. Thomas may be grateful for this anthology of angelic quotations, the ordinary reader will surely be perplexed by this deliberate choice. For he cannot hope to derive any great profit from these passages without the aid of a teacher to explain 'active and passive intellect,' 'morning and evening knowledge,' act and potency, matter and form, to say nothing of the Aristotelian conception of space, place and time. Indeed the ordinary reader would surely prefer to see the scriptural basis for devotion to the angels developed and commented on at much greater length. The second part of the book deals with the fallen Angels and includes a short treatment of circumincession, obsession, and possession, with sections on divination, astrology, spiritualism, witchcraft and the like. The author gives one or two illustrations from Missionary countries. We should like to have seen more. A final chapter is devoted to the means to overcome the devils, and the book ends with an appendix containing St. Ignatius' Rules for the Discernment of Spirits. The author has collected some very useful material, but the net result is not easy reading ; in fact this is a book requiring study, largely the study of St. Thomas, whose writings invariably repay the effort to understand them.



## THE RAMAKRISHNA MOVEMENT

**T**HERE is in Bengal an important movement of neo-Hinduism called the Ramakrishna Mission. Its message is centred round the person of Ramakrishna, a Hindu priest of the goddess Kali, who died in 1886, and who is considered by his disciples to be himself the supreme embodiment of the Divine.

The chief disciple of Ramakrishna was Swami Vivekananda. He organized the movement, and in 1893 went to the U.S.A. and spoke several times at the World's Parliament of Religions during the Chicago Exhibition. He insisted, there and afterwards, wherever he went, on the unity of all religions and on the universal value of the Vedanta, India's traditional philosophy. He organized some disciples into a religious order, and gave them an ideal of social service allied with monastic detachment. The order has grown and counts to-day some 500 monks and novices. The 'Mission' is larger than the religious order; it is an organization which runs schools and hospitals and counts many lay sympathisers. From the start the Order has sent monks abroad to preach Vedanta and recruit sympathisers and money. A few Americans, Englishmen, and other foreigners have joined the Order. The great temple of Belur was built with the help of American money.

The Swamis of the Order give themselves out as the champions of Hinduism. They do not, however, represent the traditional Hinduism of the Indian masses; this is much deeper and richer than the Westernized brand advertised by the Order. The modernists in the Catholic Church were Christian in the same way that the Ramakrishna monks are Hindu. Loisy professed the highest admiration for Christianity while emptying it of its soul; similarly these monks reject the traditional concepts of revelation, grace, priesthood, salvation from sin, and reduce Hinduism to mere naturalism. In fact their founder has been deeply influenced by Mill and Spencer, the English disciples of Comte. Through the intermediary of Bankim Chatterji, an important Bengali writer, Vivekananda absorbed many of the ideas of Comte, in particular his humanitarianism.

If Westerners wish to learn about the traditional wisdom of India and its age-long religious quest, it is not from the Ramakrishna monks that they will learn. Hinduism, though not free from errors and superstitions, and essentially distinct from Christianity, was a real and profound religion. The great Vedantins were mystics, and innumerable holy men tried to love God as they knew Him. This 'bhakti' tradition is still alive among the masses. The Ramakrishna movement, on the contrary, replaces religion by gnosis, and theocentric mysticism by humanitarian positivism. The words are kept, and some of the

exterior forms, as was the case with the Christian modernists, but not the beliefs behind them.

Monism is at the basis of the new Vedanta preached by the Swamis. That is not the case with Sankara's Vedanta. This is difficult to realize for one not well read in Hindu philosophy. Tantrism has always been popular in Bengal and when it philosophises it upholds the 'parināma-vāda' together with the 'So'ham mantra'—that is, a doctrine of real evolution together with a doctrine of fundamental identity between the universe and the Divine. Sankara, on the contrary, preached throughout India the 'So'ham mantra' (I am He) but with a doctrine of 'Vivarta-vada' i.e. illusory evolution. He upheld the transcendence of God and the distinction between finite and infinite so completely that he refused to recognise any positive value for the finite in itself. Ramakrishna was a Tantrika, and the philosophy of the Order is fundamentally (and often explicitly) Tantrika, levelling divine and finite. The God of Sankara was a pure Spirit, perfectly transcendent; while the philosophy now preached under the name and garb of Vedanta is but a mixture of Tantrism and French positivism.

In this connection it is interesting to read the writings of some 'converts' to Hinduism among modern English writers such as Aldous Huxley or Somerset Maugham. They are in close touch with the Swamis of the Order who continually cite their publications, especially those of Huxley, as a proof of the influence of Vedanta in the West. Neither Huxley nor Maugham has the slightest idea of what Sankara's Vedanta meant. The systematic opposition to Christianity of these Swamis meets here with the deep anti-Christian bias of Huxley and Maugham. It is a question of philosophy: Huxley and Maugham are not materialists, neither are the Swamis: both are interested in spiritual realization. But monism of the Tantrik type, fundamentally opposed as it is to the spirit of Christianity, gives a possibility of deep spiritual experiences, though these are not religious.

It is important to know that sex is directly connected with this type of Tantra mysticism. I do not mean to say that any kind of encouragement or incitement is given to debauch or pleasure seeking but, according to the monism and vitalism of Tantra, to pass beyond one's own individuality into a profound experience of the deepest forces of nature is to coincide with the divine. Sex experience, if undergone according to the Tantrik methods, can give this experience. It is a process of physiological sublimation of sex. Ramakrishna did practise it for several years in the company of a woman (not his wife), not in a spirit of pleasure seeking but in order to realize the Universal Sakti and to sublimate sex. The Swamis of the Order have now forbidden their monks to continue this type of 'spiritual' sex-mysticism which, according to Ramakrishna himself, is very dangerous both for the

nerves and for the soul. In this experience the sex appetite is to be excited and kept in a state of suspended excitement.

Who was Ramakrishna? A legend has been built up around this man. A disciple has written 'The Gospel of Ramakrishna,' borrowing from the Christian Gospels on such ideas as the virginal conception and the annunciation; and conversations and incidents are intelligently imitated from the Gospels. The highest spiritual experiences are here attributed to Ramakrishna; he was sincerely pious, and being without culture or discernment went through the most varied practices, coming out of this long sadhana with a nervous system quite shattered.

I believe him, indeed, to have been profoundly religious and sincere, even in his idolatry. He became a centre of the neo-Hindu revival at the end of last century. Now he is adored with all the paraphernalia of idolatrous worship by the simple people and by the younger monks. The older monks say that this is only a concession to the spiritual childishness of the devotees, but they think it right to organize and officially countenance this idolatrous worship. Every day the idol of Ramakrishna is fed and washed and put to sleep, etc., in the Belur Temple.

Vivekananda had some culture and learning, and was a powerful orator. He was closely connected with the nationalist leaders, and he gave his neo-Hindusism a strongly political and nationalist turn, assuring its popularity by violent denunciations of the West and the exaltation of everything Hindu. He was not a thinker, or a spiritual man, but he was a good organizer. His insistence on social and national service was welcome, and this is what still attracts most disciples to the Order. The Order has done charitable work along the lines of the Christian missionaries. The intention of competing with, and replacing, these Christian organizations is evident.

The Ramakrishna Mission has opposed the Christian preachers of the Gospel from the beginning, and has been largely responsible for the stopping of conversions to Christianity among the educated Hindus of Northern India. Their great slogan, repeated everywhere, is that all religions are the same. They affirm that they do not wish to convert any one, but that neither should any religion seek converts. They pay a lip-respect to Christ and Mahommed, but they reinterpret Christianity or Islam from the point of view of their own syncretic Hinduism. In reality they wish to make every one abandon his Faith and adopt their own humanitarian positivism. Christ, they teach, is a great man, but only theologians make of him an exclusive Son of God; he preached a social ideal of service, but theologians brought in ideas of sin and redemption. Therefore let all Christians remain Christians but on the neo-Vedantic basis of non-revealed man-centred syncretism, which is the true Religion behind all narrow, credal religions.

According to the theologians of the Ramakrishna Mission theism is a

low form of religion, and prayer or repentance for sin should be discouraged. The Divine is not a person but a Force ; man is naturally divine, and incapable of sin.

In brief, the Ramakrishna Mission is a directly anti-Christian movement. It is not representative either of Hinduism or of Indian tradition, but is an orientalist form of monism. It has done and does a certain amount of social work, chiefly with the backing of the most reactionary elements in India : princes and big land-owners who finance this movement to a large extent. They are not all or individually the sort of men which the foregoing account of this movement might suggest them to be ; but Christians in the West should not take for Hinduism, or for Vedanta philosophy, what is presented as such by the Swamis. To do so would be to miss all that is tragic but fascinating in Indian religion and Indian philosophy.

E.D.M.

#### SHORT NOTICES

We have received two issues (1947) of *Cahiers Laënnec* (Lethielleux, Paris, 300 fr. annually) a quarterly review, now in its seventh year, which is devoted to those frontier problems that are shared by the moral theologian, the doctor, and the psychiatrist. No one of these can afford to be ignorant of the current theory and practice of his colleagues ; and we think that the *Cahiers Laënnec* will find a welcome here in England from those who are professionally concerned. A very happy method of treatment has been hit upon by Professor Ombredanne, of the Academie de Médecine, and by Père Tesson, of the Institut Catholique, working in collaboration. The distinguished surgeon discusses his topic, the marriage of hermaphrodites, on the basis of his own case-book, from which he is able to quote freely ; he is followed by Père Tesson who contributes a lucid theological note in which he expounds the moral and canonical principles at issue, showing how they may be applied to the class of case under discussion. Other articles show the competence and sense of present-day needs which we are accustomed to expect from contemporary French Catholic periodicals. The *Cahiers* have in addition a literary quality which reminds us, once more, that the Catholic teacher and writer, whatever his profession, is under favourable conditions a true humanist.

Fr. Vincent McNabb's chapters in autobiography, largely devoted to reminiscence of his mother, which have been noticed here at the time of their first appearance, now stand before us in a French garb, under the title *Onze enfants, Dieu merci* (Paris, Editions du Cerf, 80 fr.). One welcomes this fact as a sign that the 'balance of trade' between the two countries in the matter of spiritual biographies, which has been so long adverse to Britain, is now beginning to be redressed.



## LANDMARKS IN CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY

**I**T is one of the paradoxes of history that such a life and ministry as that of Our Blessed Lord should have led to a peopling of the Egyptian desert in quest of His ideals. It was in part a flight from persecution. And the cultural level of the desert monks was doubtless not a very high one, a fact which may account in part for an excessive emphasis upon corporal austerity. In the main the earliest monks do not seem to have spoken Greek.

Early in the fourth century St. Antony organized a semi-eremitical life near the 29th degree of latitude, not far from the eastern bank of the Nile. Not long afterwards St. Pachomius established a more cenobitical (community) life of a milder kind farther to the south, near the 26th degree. His institute spread rapidly, and by the time of his death about the middle of the century numbered eight monasteries, organized in a life and unity much like that of a religious order. But (somewhat unfortunately) it was the Antonian model which spread early in the fourth century into Palestine and Syria and Egypt, and ran to obvious excesses, of which St. Simeon Stylites is the best known but not the most extravagant example.

St. Basil in Asia Minor (c. A.D. 330-379) may be called the founder of Eastern monachism. He insisted more strongly than St. Pachomius upon a true community life, and would not allow fasting or labour to wear out bodily strength. Still, the life was severe, with a single coarse garment, a single meal a day of bread, vegetables and water, a round of public prayer in church, the study of Holy Scripture, and labour with prayer in the fields. Something milder was needed for the West; but the rigorous life of penance with which Christian asceticism begins has the significance of the purgative way for the individual. The first need in the spiritual life is repentance, finding outward expression in penance; this is the foundation upon which the rest must be built. Both the Baptist and Our Lord himself began their public preaching with a call to repentance.

St. Benedict may truly be called the founder of religious life in the West. His life fell about A.D. 480-550; his work, indeed, still lives so vigorous a life that it may need some slight effort to recall how far back are its beginnings. That work was largely to bring a wise moderation into ideals of austerity imported from the Egyptian desert, which by their excessive rigour were liable in practice to produce laxity. The change was a drastic one. Much austerity was eliminated, and an adequate provision made for clothing, food and sleep; above all, common life was firmly established, with a regular round of prayer, work and reading. How amply the venture has been justified by its

fruits the whole history of the Western church bears witness, though the rule found more acceptance in the Teutonic lands than among the Celts. The Carthusians and Camaldolese represent combinations of cenobitical with the older eremitical ideals upon which it is impossible to dwell.

It was a rule, not an order, that spread ; usually each abbey remained independent, and it was a later development that linked them together. In the twelfth chapter of his *Benedictine Monachism* Abbot Butler has drawn a careful and striking picture of the primitive Benedictine abbot, upon whose will "the whole life of the community and of the individual monks depends" (p. 186). Except in extreme cases there was no appeal against him, and he might proceed to corporal punishment, in explanation of which "it has to be remembered that a large proportion of his community was composed of uneducated peasants, of emancipated slaves, of half-tamed Goths and other barbarians" (p. 189). He was the "spiritual father" of the community, under whose direction all mortification and prayers should be performed, and to whom all evil thoughts or deeds should be disclosed. The ancient meaning of this term "spiritual father" should be borne in mind, or else early writings may be misunderstood ; nowadays the "spiritual father" of a community usually has nothing to do with external government. There is no question of confession to the abbot, for in the early days he was not commonly a priest ; it is doubtful whether St. Benedict himself was a priest.

In the light of experience the Holy See has introduced some safeguards into the practical working of the system. The Fourth Lateran Council (A.D. 1215) founded the system of combining abbeys into congregations, though "no country but England appears to have taken the council seriously" (*ibid.* p. 240), and it was not till the fifteenth century that the modern congregational system began to prevail (*ibid.* pp. 241-3). An abbot primate was established by the Holy See in 1893, which has brought the congregations into a somewhat closer union ; but Abbot Butler was strongly of opinion that "Benedictine strength lies in the strength of strong abbeys with their autonomous families," and was prepared to accept some resulting limitations (*ibid.* p. 272).

The monks early became priests, and the abbot with them. Here we may refer to the Code of Canon Law, promulgated as from Whit Sunday (May 19), 1912. Canon 530 strictly forbids religious superiors to induce their subjects in any way to manifest their conscience to them, but commends the practice to the subjects, if their superiors be priests. The official index, under *Manifestatio conscientiae*, goes further than this and states that doubts and anxieties of conscience may only be laid open to priests ; but the index by itself does not appear to have any legal force.

The life proposed by St. Benedict, as by his various predecessors in the Church, was a contemplative life, understanding contemplation in St. Thomas' sense as prayer, reading, meditation and listening, as Mary Magdalen (Luke x, 39) listened to Christ (St. Thomas, *Summa*, II—II, 180, 3 ad 4). Great stress has always been laid upon the *opus Dei*, the divine office, as the main business of the monks; but evidently the character of the life to be led must be greatly affected by the nature of the secondary duties which fill up the rest of the day. Those which have actually been adopted appear in the main to have been of three kinds, different but not altogether mutually exclusive. The first solution was to elaborate the liturgy itself, until it grew to be almost the only occupation of the monks. This was the system adopted in the monastery of Cluny, founded in 910, which soon became an ecclesiastical centre of enormous importance. Everything was done to enhance and elaborate the splendour of the liturgy; and if this almost exclusive devotion has become modified in course of time, it has no doubt done much to strengthen the strong liturgical tradition which still abides, and is a valuable spiritual asset to the Church.

Nevertheless the Cistercian reform was to a large extent a reaction against the Cluniac tendencies, and aimed at reproducing the Benedictine life such as it had been under St. Benedict, and at returning to manual labour—though in time the choir-monks tended to leave this to the lay-brothers.

St. Stephen Harding, an Englishman, was the real founder of the Cistercians, but the great light of the order was St. Bernard, "the last of the fathers" (1090–1153). It may indeed with some justice be called an order, for it was centralized on Cîteaux no less than the Cluniacs on Cluny, a departure from the original practice.

The third manner of occupation was more definitely intellectual. Although intellectual work as such did not enter into St. Benedict's plan, there was much in the life to encourage biblical and patristic studies. In this respect the Venerable Bede (672–3 to 735), the most learned man of his time, has set the model not only for Benedictines but for all religious, and not least for those of his native land. Mention should also be made of the French Benedictine congregation of St. Maur, founded in 1621, which under the inspiration of Richelieu produced a large amount of admirable work until the French Revolution. Schools for boys likely to become monks existed at all times, and are contemplated in rule 70; schools for other boys were established in monasteries by that great English missionary St. Boniface (martyred 754), and by a decree of Charlemagne in 787. The Cluniac movement was hostile to schools, but in modern times they have become common, and their great success in this country is well known. The work is apostolic, and tends to develop further apostolic work based upon the monastery.

We turn now to the consideration of spirituality, of prayer and mysticism, as developed within the religious orders. Points of especial interest here are the relation of such spirituality to the Person of Christ and the use of the imagination in prayer.

No one, I suppose, will maintain that "Pseudo-Denis," who wrote under the name of Dionysius the Areopagite (Acts XVII. 34) about the end of the fifth century A.D., and under strong Neoplatonic influence, was at all "Christocentric." "It is an interesting speculation for the theological student," writes Dr. Sparrow-Simpson, "what the position of these writings would have been, if their author had never been identified with the disciple of St. Paul."<sup>1</sup> What is meant by Neoplatonism it is impossible to put into a few words; it may be enough to refer to Mr. Dodds' excellent *Select Passages illustrating Neoplatonism*,<sup>2</sup> and to his remark on p. 18 that "Plotinian matter," i.e. matter as the great Neoplatonist Plotinus understood it, "is complete evil." Such an attitude to matter leaves no possibility of an Incarnation; nor is much room left for that mystery in pseudo-Denis' counsel to abandon the activities of sense and intellect and all other things in straining towards union with God.<sup>3</sup> Upon pseudo-Denis is largely based the fourteenth century *Cloud of Unknowing*, admirably edited, along with Father Augustine Baker's Commentary, by Dom Justin McCann. "Whoso will look in Denis' books," says the unknown English writer, "he shall find that his words will clearly confirm all that I have said or shall say, from the beginning of this treatise to the end."<sup>4</sup> Father Baker himself, the seventeenth century editor of the *Cloud*, uses some strong language of the same kind. For example, in the eighth chapter of his Commentary, he writes, "the understanding . . . is to cast all images out of doors and to keep them out . . . and to admit only a general notion or remembrance of God, wherein yet the soul does not tarry, but speedily with her will passeth into or towards that same God." In *The English Mystics*<sup>5</sup> it is suggested among other things that Father Baker's earlier Elizabethan Protestantism "was unfavourable to the growth of the full devotional and liturgical life." But the *Cloud* is at least as emphatic as he is in the exclusion of images, and therefore is difficult to reconcile with the Incarnation.

At a later date St. John of the Cross was also influenced by Pseudo-Denis, and writes strongly against the use of the imagination. "Great," he writes, "is the error of many spiritual persons, who have practised approaching God by means of images and forms and meditations, as

<sup>1</sup> *Dionysius the Areopagite*, by C. E. Rolt : ed. Dr. Sparrow-Simpson : S.P.C.K. 1920.

<sup>2</sup> *Select Passages Illustrating Neoplatonism*. Published, with introduction and notes, by S.P.C.K. 1923.

<sup>3</sup> *Mystical Theology*, ad init. The reference is obviously to active effort.

<sup>4</sup> *The Cloud of Unknowing, and other Treatises*, with a Commentary on the Cloud by Father Augustine Baker, O.S.B., ed. Dom Justin McCann, O.S.B. Burns Oates, ed. 3, 1941 : chap. 70.

<sup>5</sup> *The English Mystics*, by David Knowles : Burns Oates, 1927 : pp. 158, 174.



befits beginners."<sup>1</sup> In the Prologue to the *Ascent*, however, he writes that he is not addressing all, but only some friars and nuns of his order, whom God is setting on this ascent. In any case he was a great poet, and Professor Allison Peers writes of "the wealth and profusion of his imagery"<sup>2</sup> and has printed an index to his principal comparisons.<sup>3</sup>

St. Teresa protests strongly against the idea that "one who has enjoyed such high favours need not meditate on the mysteries of the most sacred Humanity of Our Lord Jesus Christ," urging John viii. 12 : xiv.6. She adds: "Souls led by God in supernatural ways and raised to perfect contemplation are right in declaring they cannot practise this kind of meditation. Yet they would be wrong in saying that they cannot dwell on these mysteries. . . . The soul looks with a simple gaze upon Who He is, and how ungratefully we treat Him in return for such terrible sufferings . . . I know that it will not impede the most sublime prayer, nor is it well to omit practising this often." St. Teresa (b. 1515) was considerably older than St. John (b. 1542), who is rather to be looked up as her disciple; he writes more theoretically, while she keeps closer to actual experience. She considers, for example, what those "raised to perfect contemplation" and "the most sublime prayer" are to do when it is over, for "this supreme state of ecstasy, never lasts long."<sup>4</sup> St. John does not discuss this practical point. It is necessary to bring some criticism to bear upon the spirituality even of the great saints, but with great reverence, such as I have made it my purpose to show with regard to difficulties arising in the case of St. John Eudes.<sup>5</sup>

But now, having touched upon the two great Carmelite mystics, members of the galaxy of Spanish saints who exercised so powerful an influence in the Counter-reformation, we must retrace our steps and consider shortly that earlier revival of spirituality introduced by the coming of the friars. The friars, in general, differed from the monks in professing a definitely apostolic vocation, which was better served by having as its formal unit the province rather than the single abbey. The province could more easily provide the necessary spiritual and intellectual training by collecting a larger number of the young religious together, with a wider choice of superiors and instructors, and could more easily undertake foreign missions and some other forms of special work. The Eastern churches had no corresponding movement of friars, which else might have saved them from 'mummification.' St. Dominic appears to have been the first deliberately to found a religious order; he founded the Friars Preachers in 1216, and by the time of his death in 1221 the order had made marvellous progress.

<sup>1</sup> *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Bk. II, c. 12, no. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. I, p. XLVII.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. III, pp. 455-8.

<sup>4</sup> *Interior Castle*, 6th Mansions, c.7, nos. 14-15 : c.4, no. 18.

<sup>5</sup> See "St. John Eudes and Devotion to the Sacred Heart", an article in the *Month* for May, 1947.

Great stress was laid from the first on theology, to which St. Thomas (d. 1323) admirably adapted Aristotelian philosophy. In his *Summa* he also laid down, once for all, the principles of religious life, at a time when the friars were being attacked; the present writer has endeavoured to summarize his doctrine on the point.<sup>1</sup> Whether St. Francis (d. 1226) intended to found a religious order in the strict sense has been disputed, and the history of the Franciscans has been a somewhat troubled one, owing to the severity of the ideal of poverty, the lack of firm organization, and perhaps other causes. They are at present divided into the Friars Minor, the Capuchins, and the Minor Conventuals. St. Francis none the less has had, and still exercises, an enormous influence. This is doubtless because he came so close to our Lord by imitation, loving Him dearly and following His precepts closely. The Franciscans brought new fervour into the spiritual life of the mass of the people. St. Francis urged Holy Communion and reverence for the Blessed Sacrament. He and his sons were the real creators of popular devotions: the crib, sermons in street and market-place, hymns and prayers in the vernacular, the Stations of the Cross, the Third Order.

St. Ignatius, in founding the Society of Jesus, adapted the religious life to a still greater freedom, without the obligation of choir or of a particular habit. The work he had especially in view was the *missio*, the special 'job' as we may call it. A member of the order (or rather, if possible, a pair of them together) might be sent anywhere to work for the glory of God, to Germany and other countries like Blessed Peter Faber, to the Indies like St. Francis Xavier, to England like Blessed Edmund Campion. For this kind of life a special training was required; and all things considered it seems true to say that the Jesuit training is the severest in the Church, as it is certainly the longest. On the intellectual side great stress is laid on the course of philosophy and theology, only those being allowed to take solemn vows who have passed successfully their examinations; on the spiritual side there is a long retreat of about a month at the beginning and end of the training, spent in those Spiritual Exercises which constitute St. Ignatius's chief means of forming the apostolic spirit. Given such an ideal as the *missio*, it was natural that great stress should be laid from the first on obedience; this indeed was essential in any case, so that the principle of religious authority might be restored or strengthened in the Church, together with a proper submission to the Vicar of Christ upon earth. A highly centralized system of government maintains close contact with the Holy See, though within the order itself it is balanced by a careful system of checks. The education of youth was not the primary idea of St. Ignatius, though it goes back to his time; in some countries, indeed, including our own, it has perhaps taken up somewhat too large a place in the work of the Society, though the need

<sup>1</sup> "The Meaning of Religious Life," in the *Month* for November, 1947.

of more schools was an urgent one at the time when they were founded. Foreign missions have always been fostered, at least one being assigned to each home province ; a large number of its members work on the missions, perhaps the largest number of any single institute in the Church.

The strength of the society lies in devotion to the Sacred Heart and in the Spiritual Exercises. The special value of the Exercises lies in their directness, freedom and adaptability. St. Ignatius knows quite clearly what he wants and goes straight for it. He recognized that all were not ripe for advanced doctrine, but his solution was to leave things unsaid, not to water anything down ; where there is no lack of generosity, he gives no quarter. This is especially true of the "election," the choice or resolution which is the most vital act in the Exercises ; nothing whatever must stand in the way of God's designs upon us. In spite of an impression sometimes found to the contrary, he also allows much freedom of method, prescribing more definitely only for a short time at the beginning and end of prayer, and directing that the most should be made of any consoling thought or affection ; nothing must resist the movement of the Holy Ghost, so that the way is open to mystical prayer, if such be the divine will. He was prepared to adapt the exercises to the exercitant, according to disposition and opportunities. The retreat movement still admits of much expansion. The Society was the last of the religious orders in the strict sense, a large number of its members taking solemn vows. It has had a considerable influence upon the development of religious and spiritual life in the Church, so much in fact as to obscure to some extent the originality of its own institute.

In this rapid sketch it is necessary to pass at once to the French school, only stopping on the way to exclude from it St. Francis of Sales, whose affinities were rather with the Society of Jesus, which had furnished his teachers at Clermont. He is the greatest of the doctors of the Church in respect of his influence upon the whole spiritual life of Catholics, including those living in the world. He did much in work, and in word both written and spoken, to combat the Calvinism of Geneva.

The founder and chief of the French school was Cardinal de Bérulle (1575-1629), who in 1611 founded the French Oratory, consecrated to Jesus Christ as High Priest. His most celebrated disciples were Condren, St. Vincent de Paul, Olier, St. John Eudes, and St. Grignon de Montfort ; Bossuet also owed much of his spiritual doctrine to him. There was some tendency to Augustinian pessimism in this school, with occasional danger of Jansenism ; but also a great devotion to the Incarnate Word, with especial reference to Christ's priesthood and the sanctification of the clergy. Self is to disappear before Christ, union with whom was to be effected in the mysteries of His life, and especially in His state of Victim and in the Holy Eucharist.

The tendency in the Church, especially in the face of modern

difficulties, has been to bring religious life ever closer to the life of the laity. Something was said about "secular institutes" in the article on religious life already mentioned. The lay apostolate itself has received a great development in our own time.

This little outline may serve as a help to a general understanding of the story of Catholic spirituality, into which special episodes and features may be inserted. If the full story had to be told, "the world itself (I think) would not contain the books to be written."

CUTHBERT LATTEY.

### SHORT NOTICES

We cannot but be struck by the sufferings of so many foundresses of modern 'Congregations'—often within the very institutes that they had created. Both Mère Couderc, co-foundress of the Cenacle, and Mère de Soubiran (*Marie-Thérèse de Soubiran La Louvière*: by M. S. Guay. Paris, ed. Spes. Pp. 150. 80 fr.) were—the former, practically—the latter, actually—evicted from their Congregations, and each by the influence of a brilliant self-seeking woman who could pose as rightly supplanting the ineffectual foundresses. Add, in the case of Mère de Soubiran, the ill-advised direction, or neglect, of an eminent spiritual 'director.' The author of this life has very wisely abbreviated the enormously long biography which was, none the less, quite justifiably composed, for we ought to have all the evidence accessible; and again, she has not disguised the trickeries of Mère Marie-François which have recently come to light. Only so could the real drama of events be appreciated by us. As it is, the humble little nun appears before us in all the radiance of her sweet and suffering life: may this story make the convents of Marie-Auxiliatrice ever better known to us; under so dear a patronage, they can hardly but 'go forward and prosper' and prove, indeed, a 'help' to our generation that stands in such need of succour.

We cannot but be glad, in fact, that the laity does seem to have laid hold of the doctrine of Christ's Mystical Body with right good will; perhaps this was prepared for, a generation ago, by the great revival of love for the writings of St. John and St. Paul. Along with this, however, went a no less remarkable readiness to study the human life of our Lord in all its details. (An analogy might be detected in the modern pre-occupation with the deepest problems of the supernatural as such, contemporary with the apparitions thought to be granted together with very simple messages to children dear to our Lady.) Hence Mr. Woollen would seem to be on the right track when, having produced his book *About Jesus* on the whole for children, he writes this treatise (*Christ in his Mystical Body*: by C. J. Woollen. Sands, 6s.)—for such it really is—on the supernatural life, the nature of the mystical Body of Christ, and on its 'life' here and hereafter. We are glad that he, like the Prefaces in the Mass, reminds us that we men are to be united with the Angels no less than among ourselves: we could wish that he had insisted that Purgatory is so called and not e.g. *Expiatorium*; its pains are not a barren punishment, but a real purification.



## FINNISH MORNING

**T**HERE is no night in Finland's summer. For an hour or two at midnight a hush of utter calm lies upon forest, lake and dwelling ; everything is silent, the white slender birches are immobile, the lake-waters a mirror for reeds and for a sky streaked with the aftermath of sunset which lingers until dawn ; the birds grow quiet ; even the Finns sleep awhile (though not for long, they have too many hours of winter gloom to make up for) ; but still the clean golden light falls upon the world. This absolute tranquillity in broad light is haunting, thrilling ; it has a dreamlike quality ; it is as if a magic spell had been distilled out of all the glorious scents of the forest and now nature awaited the coming of someone with the power to end that spell.

Evidently that someone comes ; for by one o'clock the birds are in full voice once more, an ecstatic winged chorus uttering flowers of song. Even the uncouth utterances of the capercailie, " spieling " in the forest like a knife-grinder plying his trade with one hand and drawing champagne corks with the other (a dextrous suggestion, I admit) take on an ecstasy of their own.

Who could sleep long in that glorious flood of light—especially when there are no curtains in the room ? Not only a new day has begun, but a new world as well ; everything is clean, pure, burnished, as for a festival.

By four o'clock even I can no longer lie unmoved by the waves of light which overwhelm everything in a crescendo of dazzling glory. Dapples of light dodge through the birches outside my window and play like a multiple spotlight on the log-wall.

Soon I am out of doors, walking past banks of lilac whose perfume is so strong one seems almost to draw it straight into the veins, making one light-headed, just as honey enters the membrane even before it has reached the stomach ; past a stockade of yellow siberian bean-flower, and on into the ever-watchful, ever-waiting forest, the forest that is never far away in Finland. All round lies a primeval stillness in which there is something ominous, foreboding, exciting—that makes the heart beat faster, half in fear, half in wonder. Here dwells an unseen presence ; one is watched, but cannot see the watcher.

Trees are the green gold of Finland, the basis of her whole economy ; yet at the same time they have been the bulwark of that inexorable Nature the Finns have had to fight ever since the far-off days when they first ventured in their log-boats and coracles across the Baltic or groped their way through the marshes on which Leningrad now stands. Every meagre field, every tiny meadow, has had to be won

inch by inch from the sombre, imperturbable forest. With bare hands the Finns have struggled against tree and granite.

I can never think of this struggle without recalling a painting by Eero Järnefelt, who made his name at the beginning of the century. The painting, "Burning the Forest Clearing", which hangs in Helsinki's Athenæum, represents a peasant family 'burn-beating' the debris of the forest land which they have cleared with the intention of settling there; and it epitomises all the bitter drudgery and desperate stubborn faith that went towards the building up of Finnish farming. Indefatigable, grimed with smoke, shod in improvised clogs to protect their feet from the smouldering peat, the men and women in the picture control the fire with long birch poles, while in the foreground a little girl rests wearily, her wide, smoke-ringed eyes staring out with sullen realisation of the awful, unremitting labour and sorrow that life holds for her in that striving settlement which will be founded on the ashes of the forest.

Yet from this grim nature with which they have been in constant grapple the Finns have drawn deep influences that have become ingrained in their character. It is not merely that the brooding melancholy of the vast forest solitudes, and the long dark snow-thralled winters, have cast their shadow on the Finns. It is that nature has trained them so well in hardship and privation—they have endured so long all the hazards and threats the illimitable forests contain—that they feel the ways of mankind can hold nothing more formidable. Just as they have had to strive grimly inch by inch against nature, so do they confront other problems. They have learnt to ponder well and deeply the clearing of a space for a farmstead, but having once made up their mind where they are going to settle not all the forces of nature will deter them; and with a similar stubbornness they approach other problems. They have never had the visions and mirages of the plains to divert their imagination; they have always been hemmed in by the forest, have never been able to see as far as the eye can see—unless they look up to the sky; and so they have learnt to take things in a slow, right order, not lured on by what may lie in the next valley.

Nature has instilled into them a strict sense of values, for she has never given them something for nothing. Everything has to be earned. The superb Finnish summer with its brimming chalice of light has to be paid for by the stark horrors of the winter; the boundless spaces of their land are set against the utter solitude; the most favourable site for a settlement has to be won by toil and sweat.

"Hard work conquers even the worst of luck", reflects Aleksis Kivi (the first and greatest Finnish novelist) in his "Seven Brothers", written eighty years ago: "Ay, if we once start on the job, we'll stick to it with clenched teeth. But the matter needs thinking over

—wisely, from the roots upward”. Nothing could be more expressive of Finnish character than that.

The air of the dark forest was warm and lung-swelling. A score of scents mingled in its loveliness : the warm, healthy balm of pines, gay with their yellow cones which shed yellow pollen at a touch ; the fragrance of wild lilies-of-the-valley growing in profusion in the shadow of guardian rocks ; wild primulas spangling the starry moss in which the foot sank ankle-deep ; the faint vanilla scent of tiny pink and white twinflowers. Birdcherry, wild currant flowers, hazels, cool-scented ferns, all added their contribution to the air ; but loveliest of all the rare butterfly-orchis, so creamy-white that it might have been fashioned out of porcelain, and called *Flower-of-the-Hand-of-Christ* by the Finnish peasants who seek it by its exquisite, delicate scent, especially at night when the scent waxes stronger and is richer than that of the finest carnation.

In the world of treetops golden orioles plunged urgently, uttering their rich, fluting, triple-noted whistle, like jets of sunlight, asking repeatedly “ Who are you ? ” it seemed. These magnificently arrayed heralds of the summer would still visit our own country if we allowed them ; but now we know them only in bird books, or glass cases, for they have gone the way of hoopoe and honey buzzard and a score of others.

Woodcock went roding over swiftly, croaking and shrilling ; they could not contain their excitement and twisted, darting through the dusky branches in a fervent display. Thrush sang ; chaffinch rollicked ; giddy with success, a cuckoo called incessantly, complacently. The whole forest was revelling in the glory of the fragrant morning.

As if in repentance for the grim winter, nature pours forth all her loveliness into the Finnish summer. For two short months there is no night, only a golden hush which quickly radiates into morning. Petals fall instead of snow, African birds cry instead of arctic winds ; and perhaps it is the realisation that frost and snow are never far away which makes this northern summer all the more precious.

By a little foot-jetty where peasant women sometimes brought their laundry, I found a boat. I shoved it forth down the complaining shingle and clambered in. The rowlocks creaked and scruppeted, audible a mile away in that tranquil morning ; evenly the oars plashed the still surface of the lake. Fluted trails of water unfurled languidly from the bows of the tarred, ponderous boat and streamed past in glittering ripples. On the sandy, serpentine ridges of Punkaharju phalanxes of pines glowed ruddily in close array, like files of javelinmen marching down to embark.

Wild duck rose reluctantly at my approach. Slanting upwards, they emerged from the backcloth of pines and sped across the pale sky, swift silhouettes with “ Wings linked, necks astrain ” ; but there was no wild crying, only a discreet quark of warning. A crested grebe

dived headlong beneath me and came up, imperturbable, astern, standing in the water to shrug derisive wings. Beautiful, immaculate arctic terns skimmed pugnaciously *klee-ar, klee-ar*. In the green reed beds past which I glided teal whistled and plover wailed. Nearer, a curlew cried a sweet wild cry, and fluttering up and down in ecstasy above the swaying reeds uttered his queer, liquid, bubbling song, the voice of solitude. On a peeled wand marking a pike-trap a swallow perched momentarily, as if listening to the curlew, then plunging down coursed hectically hither and thither above the water, racing its own reflection.

Often in those glorious mornings I would make my way to a sandy beach two miles away, on the fringe of which, lying hidden among the bilberry scrub, I would listen and watch in the midst of that unearthly flood of liquid gold. Squirrels vaulted in the trees; the lordly capercailie spread his handsome tail and caterwauled incessantly; hawks pursued the plump ringdoves, and sometimes there would be a telltale heap of pearl-grey feathers in the undergrowth.

Once, while I lay there between forest and lake, an elk came pacing silently out of the trees fifty yards upwind. I held my breath. It was the first I had ever seen. Despite her graceless, ungainly appearance—her ugly head and shambling, heavy shoulders, long legs out of proportion to her short body, and thick neck beneath which a long dense "barbe" of hair hung down—she moved silently and easily, her gaping nostrils ceaselessly reading the air, her large ears alert to catch every sound.

She stood immobile under the trees for a long time before venturing down to the lake. Perhaps it was a pair of mallard fighting down confidently that reassured her. She crossed the sand, waded out hockdeep and sucked the cool water, pausing occasionally to lift her dripping muzzle attentively.

Having drunk her fill, she waded deeper and fed among the water-lily plants that abounded. Evidently there was good feeding to be had, and her curling tongue easily and quickly snapped the soft succulent stems.

Further out, lazy rings made by rising fish formed a pattern on the surface, and presently a beautiful, sharp-beaked bird, with a patch of wine-red on its throat, swam past, scrutinised the elk with glittering eyes, accepted her as of no consequence, and plunged cleanly and swiftly into the underworld of the lake.

Long moments elapsed before the redthroated diver reappeared, a fish gleaming in its beak. A deft flick, and up went the fish, to be caught unerringly and gulped down head first. The diver pursued and caught many fish before the elk had finished browsing on the waterplants. Then she withdrew hurriedly from the lake, and vanished into the silent forest with no more noise than a hare would have made.

A. C. JENKINS.



## RELATIONS WITH NON-CATHOLICS<sup>1</sup>

WHEREVER there is a feeling that Catholics should avoid too close contacts with non-Catholics it is due, perhaps, to the idea that their faith would be endangered. In support of this view one might appeal to the fact that all heretics are treated by the Church as being at least technically "excommunicated." The word implies being *cut off from intercourse with one's fellows* and it is too ordinarily presupposed that this is done primarily to *protect the faithful* from contamination. Such a conception of excommunication, however, is quite a false one, and one or two historical texts will make this clear.

If we go to St. Thomas and notice how he deals with the question : " May Catholics consort with non-Catholics or not ? ", we find that though he refers to the danger which may be involved he does not connect this with excommunication. He gives it as his opinion that it all depends on circumstances ; but that in general those who are *strong in the faith*, and who are more likely to convert the non-Catholics than be themselves perverted, should *not* be forbidden relations with pagans or Jews : on the contrary, there may be urgent need for such relations ; but *simple folk*, whose faith is weak, might lose it altogether if they mixed with them ; *they* must be forbidden such intercourse, at least any great familiarity or unnecessary contacts.

St. Thomas here speaks only of pagans and Jews. That is because he has already dealt with heretics and apostates : not from the point of view of their being a *danger* to the faithful, but from that of their being *excommunicated*. For, as he says, the Church's excommunication is a *punishment* which is inflicted on heretics and apostates ; and *this* is the reason why the faithful are forbidden all relations with them. Pagans and Jews do not come under the spiritual authority of the Church ; they are not liable to punishment from her, and so are not liable to excommunication. (*Summa Theologica* IIa IIae, q. 10 a. 9.)

Thus from St. Thomas we learn, first that relations with pagans and Jews are only forbidden to those who are weak in the faith, but not to those " who are strong in the faith and more likely to convert them than be themselves perverted " ; not forbidden, then, to members of the Newman Association or of other organizations for Catholic Action. And he would no doubt have said the same of relations with heretics and apostates, but for the fact that they were undergoing the *punishment* of excommunication, a punishment which required the co-operation of the whole body of the faithful.

Nowadays we have perhaps lost the sense of what excommunication

<sup>1</sup> A paper read at the Third Annual Summer-School of the Newman Association, at Stonyhurst College, 1947.

was intended for, and even in St. Thomas's day this sense was fading out. In the early ages (as we see, for instance, in the Rule of St. Benedict) it was exactly parallel to being "sent to Coventry" in old school-boy style; its whole purpose was to make a delinquent feel ashamed of himself, by being cut off from his fellows and studiously avoided by them. Being thus forced upon himself and made to feel his isolation, the excommunicated might be expected to examine his conscience and to be brought to his senses by the sheer humiliation of his position. The purpose of excommunication was to induce *rubor* (or *pudor*), blushing, shame-facedness, and thus repentance. This very "human" idea of excommunication gradually disappeared, in practice, until the penalty came to mean, chiefly, being deprived of the Sacraments and of other spiritual or temporal benefits. St. Thomas did indeed retain something of the old idea, for replying to the objection that schismatics ought surely to be *brought back* to the Church, not *cut off* by excommunication, he writes :

Excommunication is not meant to prevent others from having such apostolic intercourse with schismatics as may lead them back to the unity of the Church; in any case the cutting off itself in a sense "brings them back" since, often enough, feeling the shame of being cut off, they are brought back to repentance (*Dum de sua separatione confusi, quandoque ad poenitentiam reducuntur* (S. Th. IIa IIae, q. 39 a. 4 ad 2m).

This delightful paradox brings out well the original character of excommunication; but it is obvious that it will only work where "sending to Coventry" is effective, just as it would not work where the greater part of the school would have to be sent to Coventry. So, too, it will not work where the bulk of the population is heretical. The recognition of this may or may not be found somewhere in St. Thomas, but a happy chance has led to its discovery in an old manuscript dating back to the century preceding that of St. Thomas. It includes an anecdote from the life of St. Boniface, the apostle of Germany, a country where he had, at times, to deal with Christians whose Christianity was at a very low ebb indeed. That was in the middle of the eighth century.

Our unknown author is treating of the prohibition of relations with heretics. After saying that St. Paul *allowed* the faithful to take their meals with *Jews* or *pagans*, provided it gave no scandal to the weaker brethren, the writer goes on to say :

But if one of the brethren has been *excommunicated* we must keep away from him and not join him at prayer or at meals, or even salute him, so that he may at least be *shamed* into amendment (*ut saltem pudore resipiscat*). However, where a whole multitude of those who ought to be our brethren are wrong-headed, and no doubt deserve chastisement, we are not obliged to avoid them; for they should now be treated like the pagans, and can be consorted with on the

same basis as they are, viz. with a view to their conversion. Otherwise, when so many are avoided at once, they are not so likely to be converted, since their numbers will be proof against their feeling shame (*quos multitudo defendit a pudore*).

Thus, we read, Boniface acted, who had been sent by the Pope into the Teutonic countries, and who finding all kinds of misconduct there nevertheless lived with people who were married to their own blood-relations. This led to his being accused to the Pope for consorting with those who had been excommunicated by the Roman Church, whereas he had made a solemn oath always to uphold the decrees of the Roman See, and in particular the decree forbidding all intercourse with such people as being excommunicated. It was in fact Boniface who had excommunicated them himself! Yet Boniface received from the Pope nothing but praise, and this on the ground that he had decided to treat them as if they were pagans, and was seeking their amendment rather by sympathy than severity; nor was he considered by the Pope to have broken his oath.<sup>1</sup>

If we sum up what is pertinent to our subject from those older times, we have two permanent principles. (1) Those who are sufficiently firm in the faith should have free intercourse with non-Catholics, with the hope of leading them to the faith or of bringing them back to it. From this point of view our modern "heretics," because of their numbers, can be equiparated to those who are not Christian at all. The only qualification is that such intercourse should not be a cause of scandal to the weaker brethren, i.e. make them think that one religion is as good as another, or that what one Catholic can do another can. For, (2) those who are *not* firm in the faith, and are likely to lose it if they mix with non-Catholics, should avoid all unnecessary contacts.

While these principles stand, there are two chief factors which differentiate the situation to-day from that in the past. The first is that the old legislation envisaged *formal* heretics, people who should have known better and who knew perfectly well where they could be put right about the faith. To-day it is recognized that most non-Catholic Christians are, more or less, in good faith; that technically they are merely "material" heretics, and from one cause and another are not aware that they are astray, or if they are aware of it think they see plenty of reason for trying *any* road rather than that leading to the Catholic Church. The second factor is that formerly the social structure was relatively stable and was built on principles deriving from or baptized by the Church itself, the ordinary Catholic accepting them as a part of the nature of things. To-day, on the contrary, we are in a period of transition; the very expression "social security" is a symptom of the *absence* of security and stability. Besides that, many of our institutions, which have for centuries contributed to the order and stability of the country, yet stand indifferent if not moderately hostile to the Church. This greater complication of the life of the country, and the state of flux in which we are to-day, make it all

<sup>1</sup> One of many fragments from the school of Anselm of Laon, published by Dom Otto Lottin, in *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale*, Oct., 1946, pp. 261 ff., no. 358

the more evident that a passive attitude to the present state of things, such as characterized the average citizen in old Catholic days, would now be out of place. Nor is it active resistance that is now required of us, but rather an attitude of real *co-operation* (in the etymological meaning of the term), readiness to take a share in creating the order which is to follow the present period of transition. Where Catholics have the chance—and very many have—they need to play their part in the national life at every level and in every department of it ; to contribute to the formation of public opinion, which even now has not altogether lost its power. But all this means contacts and relationships with non-Catholics such as were never envisaged in the past.

In another context one would apologize for these platitudes, since they form the background of the work undertaken by most of our active Catholic Societies. But we are considering now our relations with non-Catholics, not merely as *non-Catholics*, but in so far as they *have* some religious adherence, or at least some religious ideas. And it is well to remember that *all* the religious bodies in this country are minorities to-day, no less than we ourselves. Even the Church of England is becoming acutely conscious of this fact ; and that Church is itself divided into many minority groups. But they and all the other denominations (and of course believing Jews too), feel that the country as a whole is becoming more and more paganized, and that forces are at work which threaten their own effective existence. That being the case, we may perhaps make a sort of examination of conscience on the subject, such as the Catholics of France have boldly done more than once since the war.

In the first place, are we to look upon their having any religious views at all as a help, or as a hindrance ? For instance, we have been working with someone for weeks ; we have got friendly and come to like each other ; one day he drops some remark which shows us that he is, let us say, a practising Anglo-Catholic. What is our reaction ? If from individuals we pass to bodies, we can ask ourselves whether we are to work with them as Catholics co-operating, specifically, with Anglicans or Methodists or Congregationalists, Quakers or Jews ; or are we to co-operate with them only as citizens with other citizens. In other words, is the fact that the religious beliefs of these people are erroneous or inadequate to weigh more with us than the fact that they have some religious beliefs ?

Next there is the question of our aims. Is our aim merely to improve the position of the Church in the land, or is it to aid the country as a whole ? We may take the Schools question as an example. Of course the needs of our Catholic schools must be kept in the forefront ; but is our aim merely to get better terms for *our* schools, or is it to improve education generally ? Do we point with satisfaction to the number of Church of England schools which have been given up to the L.E.A. —whereas the number of our schools has been constantly grow-



ing in spite of our disabilities? Again, what do we think of the *agreed syllabuses* of religious instruction in the National Schools? Are they going to be good or bad for the next generation? Or better than nothing? It is a delicate point; but can we disinterest ourselves from it? Perhaps we can hardly expect others to take an intelligent interest in our own concerns if we show none in theirs.

Having opened the ground a little with these queries let us return to the question of co-operation in practice. A review of the last few years seems to reveal, roughly, two schools of thought. The first may be called that of 'Integral Catholicism' which will have nothing to do with any such co-operation. "There must be no half-measures, no watering down; experience in co-operation proves that you will always be let down in the end." The other school would stretch co-operation to the limit: "Let us go as far as we can provided no vital Catholic principle is sacrificed." These last find their justification in the papal appeals to all those who believe in God, to all men of goodwill, to work together to resist militant atheism and to save the world from hatred and injustice.

But in certain spheres the first school is undoubtedly right. For instance, in the work of the Young Catholic Workers it is generally the only practical line to take. The Young Workers need something clear, simple, concrete; they are brought into direct touch with our Lord in the gospels; they study, judge and act on the clear, definite teaching of the Church about Christ, the Mass and the Sacraments, and they rely on prayer for the good works which they undertake, such as bringing back lapsed Catholics, entering into the active life of their Unions with sound ideas, showing up Communist propaganda. Now it seems clear that all this would be impossible if Catholics and non-Catholics were mixed together. The Catholic chaplain or the senior leader might sometimes be able to address them all together, and they would all be the better for it; but he could not speak of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament as he would to his Catholic boys alone, nor rouse them to that loyalty to Jesus Christ which finds its centre in Communion and in the tabernacle. Besides, the other chaplains too would naturally want to address them all together; they might give them much valuable information and many useful tips, but our lads would not be helped much by the general woolliness of the spiritual motives which they would be likely to suggest.

Here then is an instance where co-operation would prevent the greater good, but this attitude may have its drawbacks in other spheres. It is a commonplace that as Catholics we have a language all our own by which to express the truths of our religion. That language is based on our traditional philosophy, and on the application of that philosophy to the Faith. Our words have a definite meaning in any particular religious context; we have in them an excellent medium for accuracy and precision of expression. But these same words, or many

of them, have in course of time, outside Catholic circles, been debased in meaning ; they have taken on a vague or ambiguous sense, or have even come to have an opposite meaning. The result is that non-Catholics either understand nothing of what we say, or think they understand us when in fact they have mistaken our meaning altogether. The situation creates a dilemma. Either we fail to convey our meaning because the expressions which we use are foreign to our modern hearers ; or else we use language which they do understand,—but then can we be accurate in expressing our faith to them ? It has been said by one of our leading theologians that nothing can be done until we have brought the country back to sound philosophy and to the real meaning of words. If that is the view of the Integral School it would stand self-condemned. Not only is it fantastic to expect the non-Catholic world to shed its philosophies and come and sit humbly at the feet of St. Thomas ; but even if that were feasible, is our direct apostolic action to close down until this re-education is completed ? St. Paul gave his new disciples only the milk of the Gospel, because he realized that they were unable as yet to be fed on meat ; our Lord himself distinguished clearly between the parables which He gave to the multitudes, and the more intimate explanations of the mysteries which He gave to the Apostles. And even to these He said that He had much more to tell them, but that “ they could not bear it now.”

In this matter we should be careful not to interpret Papal ordinances issued in circumstances often very different from those of the present time as if they had been issued yesterday. Such utterances must be understood in the sense which they bore at the time when they were made. If Gregory XVI said that “ liberty of conscience ” was sheer insanity (*deliramentum* was the word he used) we must remember that at the time the claim to “ liberty of conscience ” meant a claim not to be bound by any law either of God or man. The phrase has come to mean something quite different, so that to repeat to-day what the Pope said a hundred years ago would be to convey a false idea of the mind of the Church.

So much for the ‘integralist’ school ; in certain respects it is undoubtedly sound, in others it may at times be out of touch with realities. We turn to the school of ‘co-operation to the limit.’ We remember the famous joint letter to *The Times*, signed by Cardinal Hinsley, Archbishops Lang and Temple, and the Moderator of the Free Churches. We remember the response which it evoked, the creation of the *Sword of the Spirit*, and the hammering out of the principles of co-operation with *Religion and Life*. There was much enthusiasm. Joint Christian Councils were set up in many cities and towns, but after a time failures were registered in more than one place. It is to these that the critics of co-operation point. Now what were the causes of these failures ? Sometimes it was a well-meaning chairman (perhaps the mayor of the town) who would open the proceedings with

congratulations that the Churches had, at long last, agreed to sink their differences and to work together in Christian charity! Sometimes there were imprudences on the Catholic side. More often, there was opposition to the Catholic standpoint by one or two intransigents on a committee; so that agreement became possible only on some quite jejune and inadequate statement. Catholics often felt that they had been let down by those who should have stood by them; and the question was asked: "Does not the Church lose in prestige, and what is more important, in moral influence, if Catholics put their names to something, not indeed wrong in itself, but which does not represent the full Catholic teaching nor really meet the situation?"

Another alleged result of such co-operation was that some of our weaker brethren in the faith tended to think that "it doesn't seem to be so important after all, whether one is a Catholic or not." If this were at all common it would be serious; at the same time one cannot resist asking whether such 'injured innocence' is always so innocent as is made to appear. A third result of full co-operation has been that Catholics who practise it are liable to be challenged by the Integral School for speaking, and especially for writing, in a less than Catholic sense. This means that the integralists will not make any allowance for one who, in addressing a mainly non-Catholic audience, fails to use those complete formulae of the Catholic faith which, in the circumstances, would be unhelpful to those whom he wants to help.

To sum up: Co-operation has its limits; it presents difficulties; in certain spheres it must be excluded. Always, and for all Catholics, the first and most important need is to know our faith ourselves and to practise it fully; with our heads, with our hearts, with our hands, in all our private life, in all our dealings with others. If we notice that non-Catholics are often so much better than their beliefs, that may remind us that we are so often *less* than what our faith should lead us to be. If we fail to convince others it is because we are not Catholics to our finger-tips. So for ourselves our great need is to intensify our prayer, our union with God, our personal devotion to our Lord, our charity and forbearance towards others.

But the truth of all that does not *exclude* co-operation with non-Catholics. Rather it calls for it. The last twenty years have seen both Pius XI and Pius XII appealing again and again for united action with all those who worship our Lord, with all those who believe in God, even with all those of good will, to resist the atheistic, anti-human evils of the day. The allocutions of the present Holy Father are all too little known. Their number is amazing, and he has given guidance (often in considerable detail) on every feature of the modern situation: on international, national and social problems of every kind. These Papal utterances show clearly on what lines Catholics can and should co-operate with others. We may therefore lay down as something which stands beyond question that co-operation with non-Catholics

is a thing which we should aim at, something we should take every good opportunity to realize.

What, then, of the difficulties in practice, the set-backs which we have experienced, the checks which we have met with from different sources? These are all to be expected, and even apparent failure can contain real success. Why should we be surprised if when we do work for Christ we find that we have to take up our cross daily? At the same time work for Christ must be *intelligent* work, appreciative of realities: such as the reality of non-Catholic mentalities, of non-Catholic convictions, of non-Catholic lack of convictions. In our personal contacts with those not of the Faith we should seize upon what is true in their religious beliefs, and seek to lead them further, rather than put them on the defensive by direct attack. People come to the Church by that which is good and true in what they already hold, and rarely by being shown conclusively where they are wrong.

The need to go about co-operation intelligently is the greater that what the Popes have been urging upon us is, as it were, an uncharted sea. Situations arise, are bound to arise, which have no precedent. Only our faith, our common sense and our prayer can guide us. There are bound to be mistakes; we must be prepared to learn from experience, that of ourselves and that of others. Let us acknowledge our mistakes and find new ways of fulfilling the Popes' directions.<sup>1</sup>

MAURICE BÉVENOT.

<sup>1</sup> Further official guidance in co-operation with non-Catholics has just been provided by a declaration from the Holy Office dated June 5th of this year. It is there stated, among other points, that neither priests nor laymen may attend interdenominational meetings dealing with the questions of faith without a dispensation from the Holy See. A speaker on the Vatican wireless has stated that religious discourses in small or intimate circles would not be affected by the decree.—ED.

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#### SHORT NOTICE

**Discourses on Our Lady** is from the pen of a busy parish priest in Seattle, America. It is published by the Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee. There are thirty-three fairly long discourses, and an index which adds greatly to the practical value of the book. These talks could be used for the Month of May devotions in a parish during two or three years. They provide an abundance and a variety of subjects always well chosen and clearly divided. References to the Fathers and Saints on disputed or difficult points of doctrine are provided, notably in the chapters on 'Mary at the Foot of the Cross,' 'Mary, the Co-Redeemer of Mankind,' and 'Mary our Salvation.' The two final chapters, 'Devotion to the Heart of Mary' and 'Devotion to Mary a Pledge of Salvation' are valuable little treatises in themselves. Fr. Nicholas O'Rafferty, the author, has the true parish priest's gifts of clear exposition, conciseness of language and a certain homely yet reverent devotion. We warmly recommend this volume.



# MISCELLANEA

## CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL NOTES

### NEW ORIGEN DISCOVERIES

IN 1941, at Toura (10 km. from Cairo), there were discovered several hundred pages of papyrus in a fairly good state of preservation, the greater part of which seems to contain writings of Origen. The sole report on these discoveries, so far ascertainable, is the account which was read by M. H-Ch. Puech to the French *Académie des Inscriptions* on August 9, 1946, on behalf of M. Octave Guéraud (who is engaged on the deciphering of the papyri), and published in their *Comptes Rendus* for 1946. It may, then, be of interest to readers of the MONTH, both professional and dilettanti, to have some of the facts there disclosed set before them. The pressure upon the space of even the more spacious journals is such that events which are not of almost universal interest easily find themselves excluded. This must be the excuse for what follows. While, of course, without M. Puech's account<sup>1</sup> this note could not have been written, he cannot be held responsible for any of the opinions or conjectures that may be made in its course.

The most surprising tract among the discoveries is one, hitherto unknown, called the *Dialektos* of Origen. It reproduces a discussion between Origen and a certain bishop Herakleides, in the presence of a number of bishops, on the relationship of God the Father with the Son, and also on the soul of man. The striking thing about this work is that it shows Origen, a layman or at most a simple priest, questioning a bishop whose orthodoxy is apparently suspect, in the presence of other bishops at what might be called a minor Council or Synod. Such procedure recalls the treatment of Pelagius some two hundred years later; for he too was, in July 415, interrogated by a young Spanish bishop, Orosius, at Lydda, in the presence of the Bishop of Jerusalem, and compelled to give a statement of his views on Grace. (The Church had her own way of dealing with heretics or fellow-travellers in those days.) That Origen in this new case should be the protagonist, or the counsel for the prosecution, is certainly surprising; for he never attained to episcopal rank. But perhaps his position as head of the catechetical school of Alexandria, and his reputation as an exponent of the Scriptures, had won him a position to which his rank in the Church did not entitle him. At the same time one cannot help contrasting this esteem of Origen, in his lifetime, with the hue and cry after his works for heresy which arose when he was in his grave.

In the course of the interrogation Origen has to urge Herakleides to admit a distinction between Father and Son, and to agree that in one sense they are two, so that the statement 'There are two gods' can bear an orthodox interpretation if rightly understood. This at once recalls the disputes between Hippolytus and Pope Callistus, and later between the two Denises (the one at Rome and the other at Alexandria) upon the unity of God. Noetus, in Asia Minor, seems to have begun the trouble by preaching the complete identity of Father and Son. "The Father Himself is Christ, Himself the Son, Himself born and suffered and Himself

<sup>1</sup> *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions*: Paris, 1946, Séance du 1<sup>er</sup> Géut.

raised again." When interrogated by the assembled bishops of Asia (about the years 185-190), and by them put out of the Church, he did not cease from his heresy, but passed it on to others, so that in time his disciples appeared at Rome. Here Hippolytus tells at least a part of the story in his attack on Pope Callistus. Hippolytus says that the Pope of the time (c. 200), Zephyrinus, was a simple unlettered man, quite under the thumb of the scheming Callistus, who persuaded him to come out with the declaration: "I know one God, Christ Jesus, and apart from Him none other that was born and suffered." Zephyrinus then added a second statement: "It was not the Father who died, but the Son." Hippolytus treats this as an attempt to keep the fires of theological faction ablaze by showing sympathy with both sides in the great dispute about the unity of God; but in reality it is clear that the Pope intended, by his first statement, to re-assure the ordinary faithful, who were accustomed still at this period to profess their faith in Christ at baptism and who were not preoccupied with Trinitarian problems; while the second statement was meant to be a clear rejection of the ideas of Noetus and of the identification of Father and Son. When Hippolytus opposed these papal declarations, he was, according to his own account, called a ditheist for his pains by the malicious Callistus. If this story is in the main true (and it was a study by Cardinal von Preysing in the Innsbruck *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*, in 1928, that proved, against Harnack and Dom Capelle, that it was) then Callistus must be thought to have proceeded against Hippolytus for heresy by calling him a believer in two gods. If, then, these newly discovered writings of Origen show him to be encouraging a bishop, who is suspect of heresy, to say that in one sense there *are* two gods, this need not be a sign that Origen is on the side of Hippolytus, but rather that he is guarding the bishop against the complete identification of Father and Son which Noetus made. When the actual words of the dialogue are made accessible to us it will be possible to say more clearly what Origen is at; but in the meantime this review of the Trinitarian debates of the time, a time when the later formula of one nature and three Persons had not been elaborated, will show what value the new discoveries may be expected to have for the study of Catholic doctrine. When it is further realized that the activities of Zephyrinus and Callistus are one of the first well-documented instances where the papacy is seen in action in the early centuries, then expectation will be all the keener.

When Denis of Rome, who was Pope from 259 to 268, wrote to the Alexandrines to check their theological vagaries, he denounced the errors of Sabellius, which they also reprobated: "Sabellius blasphemes when he says that the Son is the Father, and vice-versa." "But I learnt," the Pope continues, "that there are some among you who oppose the opinion of Sabellius, as it were diametrically: in a certain sense they preach three gods, dividing the holy Unity into three hypostases that are estranged from one another and altogether separate." If Origen had, some 40 years earlier, been encouraging the bishop Heracleides to say that there were, in a certain sense, two gods (as these new writings apparently show), then it is again easy to understand how the Alexandrian Church had come to preach that there were in a manner three gods, seeing that now speculation was not content with the discussion of the relations of Father and Son, but brought into the argument the Person of the Holy Ghost.

The Church of Egypt was peculiar in the manner of its government, having, until the time of Bishop Demetrius (189-232), only one bishop for the whole country; whereas in other parts of the world one bishop

to one town was the rule. This may have been due to the influence of the Roman organization of the civil administration of the country which, as all Roman historians remark, was quite different from that of any other province. There was but one city or *civitas* in the province, Alexandria, and the rest of the land was divided into *nomes* or rural districts, whatever the density of their population. It may therefore have been thought natural by the Christians that only one bishop, at Alexandria, should administer the Church of Egypt. Now Demetrius made a change, raising the number of bishops to four. How then can Origen be discovered examining one bishop, Herakleides, in the presence of other bishops, if the scene is still Egypt? That is one of the problems on which the new papyri may be expected to throw light. It might be, of course, that the meeting took place at Caesarea, and at a much later period in Origen's life when he had left Egypt for good; and in that case the information which the new papyrus affords would be all the more valuable, since the later period of Origen's life is less well documented than the earlier. Eusebius (H.E. 633) tells of the interrogation by Origen of Beryllus, an Arabian bishop, at this later period.

After the examination of Herakleides has been concluded the discussion is thrown open to all, and various questions are addressed to Origen for him to answer. Among these is one about the soul: Is the soul to be identified with the blood? This causes Origen to express his astonishment that such a question could have been put. It is known already from his treatise *De Principiis* that Origen was a firm advocate of the soul's immateriality or spiritual nature; but the quality of the opposition to that doctrine, in his time, has been harder to estimate. If it now turns out to be something like the Nazi worship of the blood-stream, a materialism only one degree better than the blind acceptance of matter and motion as the ultimate realities, then much will be explained about the difficulty which the early Christian Fathers experienced in presenting the doctrine of original sin to their converts, and in preventing them from thinking of it as something physically transmitted in the act of procreation.

In his article on Origen in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie catholique*, M. Bardy, commenting upon the fact that occasionally a few scraps of papyrus are found to contain bits of the works of Origen, ventured upon this remark: "On aurait tort, semble-t-il, de compter sur un hasard heureux qui nous remettrait en possession d'éléments essentiels. Les travailleurs de l'avenir n'auront probablement pas grand' chose à ajouter au catalogue que nous pouvons aujourd'hui dresser." (Tom. xi. col. 1495, 1932.) That such a categorical forecast should be proved false within the space of ten years is only one of the ironies of the progress of scholarship. Hitherto the sands of Egypt have not been very generous in yielding up texts of the Christian Fathers to the investigator, if one excepts the numerous fragments of the *Shepherd* of Hermas. The new discovery is perhaps due to the fact that the present find seems to have been the remains of some ancient monk's library which had been abandoned or hidden in the one place. Usually the finds of papyrus are made in the refuse dumps of ancient Egyptian villages, when it is only to be expected that the papyri will be in small pieces.

The other works of Origen which have been found at Toura include some that have been known in the past: though only in a Latin translation, and in a poor translation at that. The translator of Origen, Rufinus, when he came to the end of his labours in the task of turning Origen's commentary upon *Romans* into Latin gave a short explanation of his method.

Among other admissions, he there confesses that where Origen in his homiletical style dropped many questions as soon as he had raised them, in order to keep to his point, these gaps have been made good in the translation. He also owns up to cutting his author, and in general he found the work of translating, though he was a competent rhetorician, an "immensus et inextricabilis labor." The parts of Books V and VI of the commentary which have now come to light in the original Greek will therefore be of great value for ascertaining the true mind of Origen in what is, after all, the earliest known commentary on *Romans* ever written. Books V-VI cover the verses from Rom. 3. 5 to 5. 17, the very heart of St. Paul's teaching on Justification.

There have been found also the remains of four *cahiers* of papyrus which contain a work of Origen's upon the Pasch. Since the homily of Melito on the Pasch was published in America in 1941, from a Michigan papyrus, it has been possible to realize much more fully what the early Christians thought about while they were engaged in commemorating the Passion and Resurrection of Christ; for this homily was preached on such an occasion. If Origen is now to tell us more on this subject it will be possible to enter more fully into the mind of the Christian worshipper at the moment when he was at Mass. We shall then (even though liturgical texts for these early times are so disappointingly short) know better what it felt like to go to Mass in the days of persecution. The Good Friday *Improperia* reflect many of the sentiments which Melito tries to evoke in his audience; if Origen has done the same it will be clear that Melito was not alone in his reprobation of the Jews, but that it was almost common form among Christians after the time when, during the revolt of Akiba in Palestine (A.D. 132), Jews had put Christians to death.

Besides the writings of Origen this monastic library contained some commentaries by Didymus the Blind, a scholar of the late fourth century, on parts of the Old Testament. Of these a number of pages running to more than a hundred have been found, containing the Commentary on Genesis, on Job and on Zachary. It is known that St. Jerome had used Didymus, for he mentions that in the Genesis commentary he held that Melchisedech was an angel, following, in this, his master Origen. The commentary on Zachary was written at the request of St. Jerome, and was used by him in his own work. The work on Job has been known by a few small fragments which are found labelled "Didymus" in the so-called *Catenae* in which Greek writers of the sixth century, and later, collected for themselves strings of quotations from the Fathers in explanation of each verse of the sacred text of Old or New Testament. Now it is a matter of much difficulty to know whether the labelling of these citations was rightly done by these later Greek scribes. If they were careless the labels may have been confused. It is only by possessing the full work of one or more of the Fathers quoted by a scribe that one can judge of the scribe's care in labelling; and then go on to infer that, even when he labels some passage with the name of an author whose works are lost to us, he may be trusted to be giving a genuine quotation from that author. It will be seen, then, that a great stimulus to patristic studies is about to be afforded by these new discoveries. If what has been written here can serve only to add to that stimulus, without giving to readers the means of satisfying their curiosity, that is all to be ascribed to the difficulty and slowness which the work of deciphering papyri necessarily involves. One can but wish success, and all speed, to those who are engaged upon the task.

J. H. CREHAN.



## THE TRUE PORTRAIT OF ST. STANISLAUS

A DISCOVERY of high importance has been made owing to the enterprise of Fr. P. Doncoeur, S.J. We had long been familiar with the portrait of St. Stanislaus painted on wood and preserved at St-Symphorien d'Ozon. The little Saint was shown in a novice's black dress with a wide open white collar. He had always seemed to the present writer as far too young for a novice even of 16 or 17; still, the face was so very unconventional with its wide cheek-bones, its very alert eyes, its enchantingly short (if not snub) nose, and its lips that seemed to us pursed in order not to laugh, that we had no doubt that it was a true portrait. Meanwhile we had thought not only that the head was crowned with some sort of black *calotte*, but that the forehead had puzzlingly a sort of dull smudge across it, and apparently this is what intrigued also Fr. Doncoeur. Greatly daring, he submitted it to M. Aubert, the official 'restorer' of the Louvre museum, who recognised that the portrait had been painted over, and was earlier than 1568, when the Lorraine artist Delfino, then at Rome, was supposed to have painted it. The cleaning revealed first, that the skull-cap was vermilion. Then, that the little Saint, aged about nine, was wearing a tawny doublet. It became evident that the portrait had been painted in Poland, and was presumably sent to Rome after the boy's early death (1568), where the bright dress of the little prince was painted over with the discreet habiliments proper to novices. A reproduction was published by the *Paris Illustration* for October 11th, 1947; but a superb new reproduction by the famous artist M. Jacques Beltraud is now available at the Editions de l'Orante, 23 rue Oudinot, Paris 7e. These coloured portraits can be obtained from that address (C.C.P. 1851-92 Paris), for 500 francs (about 14/-, we are told, at present). Evidently less expensive reproductions will be available. We can thus be sure of having an authentic portrait of St. Stanislaus; and fairly sure of having a reasonably truthful picture of St. John Berchmans with his (to me) not very Flemish face, and a primness unable to disguise his intense vivacity; but it would seem that we can hardly hope for anything convincing of St. Aloysius, the stranger because of the Gonzaga mania for having their portraits painted. Apparently all earlier pictures of him are either based on a description given by his confessor, St. Robert Bellarmine (and you know how difficult it is to describe a face!), or, are purely imaginary. My own conjecture is that when he went home after his father's death to settle the quarrels between Vincent Gonzaga duke of Mantua and Rodolfo, Aloysius's brother to whom he had made over his marquisate, the forceful youth caused all his portraits to be destroyed. I expect his mother will have kept one little picture secretly, but both she and Rodolfo were only too anxious to do everything Aloysius wanted, though for different reasons.

## A CHRISTMAS POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

OWING to the kindness of Fr. E. F. Sutcliffe, S.J., and two helpful collaborators, I can add a little to what I wrote in *THE MONTH* for February in this year, about the Post-Communion of the second Christmas Mass. I was ignorant that it had been so learnedly discussed and diversely

interpreted. I recall that the Latin is: "*Huius nos . . . sacramenti semper novitas natalis instauret cuius nativitas singularis humanam repulit vetustatem*," and that its word-for-word translation is: "O Lord, may the natal newness of this Sacrament (or, newness of this natal Sacrament) ever build us up, the unique nativity of which has thrust back human oldness." No wonder Dom G. Morin, O.S.B. calls the prayer a "Liturgical Enigma" (*Revue bénédictine*; Apr., 1935, pp. 170-174). He is reviewing another review by Dom de Bruyne who considers the text to be corrupt in all the MSS. and to be corrected thus—"May the natal-feast of this Mystery (i.e. Christmas) ever build us up, the unique newness of which (Mystery) has thrust back etc." Dom Morin however quotes M. L. Fayolle who rightly says that one should *begin* by comparing the Gelasian sacramentaries with the "Gregorian" (which are all much younger: period of Charlemagne), and he in fact finds that five of the most ancient Gelasian manuscripts write: "*Huius nos, Domine, sacramenti semper natalis instauret, cuius nobilitas singularis humanam repulit vetustatem*": this is to mean: "May the natal-anniversary of this Mystery (Christmas) ever renew us—this Birth (feast) whose unique nobility has thrust back, etc." Thus the word *novitas* is eliminated, and *natalis* (*scl dies*) becomes a substantive: and *nobilitas* replaces *nativitas* ('nobility' in such a context is shown to be quite in place). Dom Morin was at first attracted by this, but came to feel that in a *post-Communion* '*huius sacramenti*' must refer to the Holy Eucharist just received; and so many post-Communions begin thus, where *sacramentum* can mean nothing else (though of course the word as such can have much wider senses), that for me too no doubt is left. As for *nobilitas*, the writing of *b* for *v* was so common so early, that I feel certain, with Dom Morin, that some early scribe, reading *nobitas*, and forgetting that *b* might well stand for *v*, thought that a syllable had fallen out, and wrote *nobilitas*. So Dom Morin, remembering the constant opposition of *novitas* to *vetustas* in the Christmas Liturgy (e.g. in the first prayer: "*nova nativitas*" contrasted with "*vetusta servitus*"), *preserves* the word, but *transfers* it to the second clause—"cuius novitas singularis humanam reppulit vetustatem" instead of "*nativitas*" now read there. How then reconstruct the first clause? By reading *sacramentum* for *sacramenti*—an emendation the easier, I suggest, not only because *huius* could so easily 'attract' the following word into its own genitive case, especially as '*huius sacramenti*' is so very common in the Missal, but also because the *m* would have been written as a mere stroke over the *u*—and such a stroke so often fades out!—and because a *u* in older MSS. is often hardly distinguishable from an *i*. We would then read: "May the Sacrament (the Eucharistic commemoration) of this Birthday ever build us up, the unique newness of which (birth) has cast away our oldness (which, like servile chains, weighed heavy upon us: thus, I may add, 'thrust away' is not so odd, if the *vetustas* is thought of as a heavy enslavement rather than as an interior element grown stale—like the 'ancient yeast'). Dom Morin ends by wishing that a complete list of textual errors, still in the Roman Missal, should be made, and the true version reconstituted. Textual emendation is of course the last method to which we should have recourse, and I am still rather inclined to preserve the text here, allowing for a slight 'side-slip' in thought on the part of the writer, just as there is an undoubted syntactical side-slip in the first Prayer of this Mass.

C. C. MARTINDALE.

# REVIEWS

## THE RETURN OF THE MYSTICS<sup>1</sup>

THE difference in intellectual climate between the commentary on St. John's gospel by Sir Edwyn Hoskyns which appeared in 1940 and that by Archbishop Bernard, which preceded it by twelve years, is so great as to be fitly regarded as a portent of the times. No longer is the reader disturbed by the unquiet ghost of John the Presbyter, but he is free to pursue his pensive meditations on the deeper meanings of St. John's words and to glimpse something of the symmetry and patterning which Hebrew artistry dearly loved to stamp upon its works. Among Catholics there has long been room for a work which with sure scholarship but without parade of learning would present the spiritual doctrine of St. John in an easily-accessible form. The student of theology is given his proof-texts from St. John in isolation; John 3. 15 for baptism and so on, while on the other hand the detailed commentaries are engrossed with philology, and meanwhile: "Poor Tom's a cold." Some years ago Père Huby produced a little book on the Discourse of Our Lord after the Last Supper, and now he has given us a complete study, with fuller texts, of St. John's spiritual doctrine, and of that of St. Paul as well. It is called a *mystique* only in the wider sense which denotes that supernatural reality which makes the Christian a child of God; mysticism, in the narrower sense of a conscious awareness of the life of grace, is treated only as a subordinate part of the whole. Even so it is not without its importance, for St. Paul was caught up to the third heaven and St. John saw a door opened in heaven and was invited to enter therein. Thus, though the greater part of his book is taken up with the spiritual significance of baptism as "death-along-with-Christ," and with the imitation of Christ as taught by the two Apostles, place is left for a full discussion of the visions of St. Paul and of the spiritual teaching of the *Apocalypse*.

Freedom of speech, or the right to say what one likes to God, which both Apostles call by the name of *parrhesia*, and which both allow to the baptized Christian, is obviously of very great importance in the life of prayer, and when the texts which speak of this *parrhesia* are examined, they provide a far better basis for theories of prayer than do many books of individual theorizing by modern spiritual guides which are not so grounded upon the gospel. Again, there are to be found in St. John, as Père Huby notes, signs of that desire for purgation which marks the beginning of true mysticism (e.g. at 1 Jn. 3. 3), and which is so alien to the "holy disinterestedness" of Fenelon. There is, too, something of the same idea in St. Paul's insistence upon the impossibility of the wisdom of the flesh being subject to God. At the end of all, there is the longing for

<sup>1</sup> *Mystiques Paulinienne et Johannique*. By Joseph Huby, S.J., Bruges, Desclée de Brouwer, 1948. Pp. 305. Price, 90 fr. (Belgian).

(2) *Théologie de la Mystique*. By Dom Anselm Stolz, O.S.B., Chevetogne. Bénédictins d'Amay. 2nd edition, pp. xvi + 264. Price, 75 fr. (Belgian).

(3) *L'Ascèse chrétienne*. By Dom Anselm Stolz, O.S.B., Chevetogne, Bénédictins d'Amay, 1948. Pp. 279. Price, 65 fr. (Belgian).

the coming of the Lord Jesus, which differs so markedly from the false Millenarism which has a fatal attraction for false mystics and which had to be suppressed (in Chile, of all places) by the Holy Office so recently as 1941.

When the theologians are pleased to classify mystics as seraphic, cherubic and angelic (according as their experience of God is that of One who is to be loved, known, or served), St. Paul is put into the class of "angelics". That is to say, his contemplation of God and his visions drove him on to bring men not so favoured to the knowledge and love of the same God. Gregory the Great and Ignatius of Loyola might be placed in the same class also. Their existence is a standing affront to the philosophical speculator upon mysticism, for they show that Christian mysticism (differing in this from any merely natural mysticism) may be combined with a life of activity. To Plotinus, an active life is taken up only when contemplation has failed or proved impossible: "Duller children are an example of this, for they, when they prove incapable of learning and speculation, turn aside to crafts and manual labour" (Enn. III 8. 4). Not a little of this Plotinian contempt for the mixed life has seeped into Christian writings by way of the pseudo-Denis. At the same time, an esteem for the close linkage between vision and action in the life of St. Paul does not force one to accept the idea which Dom Stolz has put forward: that it was to his vision of Paradise that St. Paul appealed to justify his claim to be an apostle. Père Huby (p. 137) removes the patristic foundation which Dom Stolz thought he had laid for this theory. The point is of some importance, for if St. Paul's ecstasy can be treated as the crown of his spiritual life and not merely as a divine favour vouchsafed to him without cause shown, then he is the palmary instance to prove the theory that mysticism is the crown of all spiritual perfection, and that if any soul does not reach to mystical prayer it must be through some sin or failing, and not merely (as others say) because God does not choose to grant that favour.

Dom Stolz, who died in 1942 at the early age of 42, after having spent one-third of his life teaching theology in Rome, had elaborated a theory of mysticism which would, he thought, remove some of the rough edges of the "mysticism for all" theology which had been expounded in France in the 1920's. Paul (he supposes) was translated to a material Paradise by local motion, at the time of his ecstasy, and, similarly, for the faithful soul that seeks God in prayer there is an entry into Paradise, a stage to be reached in this life, which is distinct from the kingdom of heaven hereafter. The tradition which he offers for this view is certainly not peremptory, and in fact the earliest patristic tradition regards the reception of baptism as an entry into Paradise. "The Jordan is glorified by regenerating men and planting them in the Paradise of God," cries Gregory of Nyssa, and from the *Odes of Solomon* to the hymns of Ephraem the idea constantly recurs. The baptized crosses Jordan and enters a promised land where he is given milk and honey, and the promised land turns out to be Paradise where by a *recirculatio* he receives back something of what Adam had lost; but that he receives the right to mystical converse is not said nor yet implied by the Fathers. Adam may have enjoyed that *parrhesia* which is restored to the baptized, but this is not in itself a mystical experience. If one is to maintain that baptism is the beginning of the truly mystical life, a first point of dawn which afterwards broadens to perfect day, then one will have to say that every phase of the life of faith is mystical experience



of greater or less clarity : " Il n'en résulte pas que chaque élan de tendresse de n'importe quel fidèle dans l'exercice de sa foi soit une expérience mystique." But why it should not be so in his position, he does not show. Had Dom Stolz lived to study the work of his fellow monk, Dom Lucien Chambat (reviewed here, May-June, 1946), he would surely have modified his conclusions.

The third work to be noticed is a series of considerations for a retreat, which have been thrown into the form of a treatise on the ascetic life ; and as such they appeal more to the speculative intellect than to the practical. The conferences were given first of all in French from notes and then in Italian, in which language they were first published. This book is a translation of the Italian. The aim is to present a metaphysic of asceticism. The hermit is the perfect ascetic and exemplar of all others. The essence of asceticism is *extra mundum fieri*. One must seek a desert not merely because that is outside the world, but because it is a battleground with demons, and because across the desert Paradise is to be found once more. No doubt the Desert Fathers did go into the wilderness to do battle with Satan in a spirit of chivalric knight-errantry, and Cassian is here quoted, quite correctly, as saying that a monk ought to avoid the imposition of the bishop's ordaining hands as he would the proffered embraces of a woman (Instit. xi. 18). But this is precisely where such grandiose transcendental deductions break down. The plain fact is that the desert was a well-known refuge for the *fellahin*. When the Roman tax-collector was about to visit a village, the whole population would sometimes decamp and leave the place uninhabited until it was safe to return. What more natural than that Christians in search of a refuge for other reasons should find it in the desert ? No inner logic of the nature of things drove them to it. Again, when Dom Stolz comes to deal with the relation of priesthood to the life of the counsels, he has to present it as an awkward incumbrance, a surd element in his metaphysic. Only such priestly duties as are indispensable and do not disturb recollection may be tolerated (p. 69). He has here forgotten that even great mystics, such as St. Paul, can be prodigies of external activity ; and he ignores the momentous change which St. Ignatius brought into the practice of asceticism by first carrying out himself, and then making possible for others, a mixed life which was not, as previously, lived in alternating periods of contemplation in retirement and action in the world but was day by day to be made up of both together, and in which action was to help contemplation and vice-versa. It was for this that he so strongly insisted on the freedom of his Society from choir, while at the same time systematizing earlier practices of the presence of God and the use of examination of conscience. Dom Stolz, says the writer of a short memoir which is added to his Mystical Theology, had " un certain amour de l'érémisme " which influenced his thought. It certainly seems to have produced a bias in his views on asceticism ; for, to St. Thomas, the hermit is already in a state of perfection, and not, as such, of much use as a model for those on the way to perfection in religious life : any more than the asymptote to a curve gives an exact picture of that curve's nature. As these conferences are now given to the reading public, and no longer reserved to those whose vocation is in some measure cloistered, it has seemed fair to criticize their presuppositions, while one can readily admit that they show the true *pietas* of a theologian.

J.H.C.

RELIGION IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY<sup>1</sup>

LITERATURE devoted to the endeavour to find a way to Christian Re-union is familiar to us. Now from New York, we have a volume which goes outside Christian revelation and sets forth some of the non-Christian beliefs side by side with some of the Christian, the Editor expressing the pious sentiment that the present "era desperately needs a religion that can bring men together." But he shows a sad misunderstanding of the difficulties when he continues: "To this end the various religious households must transcend their provincialisms and each, after its own kind, give voice to that in its heritage which reflects the Universal Spirit brooding upon all sons of men of genuinely good will everywhere." The religious households we are presented with are strangely diverse. Good will is of no avail without a clear understanding of this problem in its essence. Of the twenty-eight essays (each by an adherent of the sects described eleven are devoted to religions peculiar to the Middle and Far East, and three more to different groups of Jewry. "Catholicism" has three essays, 'Roman,' 'Greek Orthodox' and 'Anglo-Catholic.' There is nothing on the Baptists, Wesleyans or Methodists, yet we find three distinct essays on "The Bahai Cause," "The Ramakrishna Movement" and "Zoroastrianism." One wonders how the last of these could find a place in a work of such a title as "Twentieth Century Religion" when, although it has been in existence for over two thousand years, the author claims for it "less than 130,000 adherents in the whole world."

The reading of such a volume will certainly not achieve what the author fondly hopes to see it achieve; but it does give some idea of the notions running through the heads of Americans in their search for ultimate principles. They may all be searching for a religion, but those who are within the portals of "Ethical Culture," "Naturalistic Humanism," and "Reconstructionism" have assuredly not yet found it. The word "religion" connotes something to do with God. To use it, as these three essays do, of amorphous beliefs which essentially deny the existence of God, and a fortiori any relationship between man and God, is but one more sign of the twentieth-century's retreat from reason and sanity. Humanism is not religion. If, therefore, Vergilius Ferm achieves no more by the volume than persuading men to stop and ask themselves 'what is religion' and 'what is it for?'—and gets them to agree unanimously about its definition and its purpose—his labour will not have been spent in vain.

<sup>1</sup> *Religion in the Twentieth Century*. Edited by Vergilius Ferm. New York, The Philosophical Library. Price, 5\$.

## EDITORIAL NOTE

All contributions submitted to the Editor must be typed and be accompanied by a sufficiently large stamped addressed envelope—stamps (or Post Office coupons from abroad) alone will not suffice. Articles submitted should be concerned with matters of general interest, and be the fruit of expert knowledge or original research. They should not ordinarily exceed 3,000 words, and must be intended for exclusive publication in "The Month," if accepted.

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